

IN THE INDEPENDENT TOMORROW

'I know you're incredulous. From rambling to runway
- am I nuts? What about my cellulite? My glasses?'

JANET STREET-PORTER: DIARY OF A CATWALK MODEL

THE BEST WRITING, WEEK IN, WEEK OUT: T. DEBORAH ROSS, HOWARD JACOBSON, HAMISH McRAE, MARK STEEL, ROBERT FISK, TERENCE BLACKER
JOHN WALSH, RICHARD WILLIAMS, DAVID AARONOVITCH, ANNE McFIVY, THOMAS SUTCLIFFE, MILES KINGTON, SUE ARNOLD, ANDREAS WHITAM SMITH

MARK STEEL
CLASS WAR AT THE
BOAT SHOW
PLUS MUSIC,
ARCHITECTURE &
SCIENCE

PM attacked over private visit to wards

TONY BLAIR disclosed yesterday he had been on a Princess Diana-style visit to a hospital casualty ward to find out for himself about the stress facing overworked nurses coping with soaring numbers of patients suffering from the flu outbreak.

The Prime Minister spoke to nurses and patients during the hour-long unannounced visit to St Thomas's hospital opposite the House of Commons before giving a clear signal at Question Time that the nurses can expect an inflation-busting pay increase to tackle nurse shortages.

The Prime Minister's official spokesman appeared to contradict Frank Dobson, the Secretary of State for Health, who last week admitted that the NHS was in crisis over the extra pressures caused by the flu outbreak. "He did not come away thinking that the health service is in crisis," said the spokesman.

That may have risked repeating history with headlines saying: "Crisis - what crisis?" Twenty years ago, James Callaghan returned from Guadeloupe and earned the

BY COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

same headlines after dismissing an economic crisis, and went on to lose the general election. But a hospital spokeswoman said: "To be perfectly honest, we are not in crisis here. It has been very busy, but we are coping. It is no worse than it was last year."

Nursing unions accused the Prime Minister of making "empty promises" on pay and insisted there was a crisis. Liane Venner, Unison deputy head of health for the London area, said: "I think the fact that the Prime Minister has visited a hospital is a sign that the Government is taking the issue seriously but he cannot say there is no crisis. Ask any hospital nurse who is working very long hours for very, very long pay in an overstretched hospital and they will tell you there is a crisis."

The visit had been kept secret from all but the management of the hospital, who were told 24 hours before his arrival, but Mr Blair later revealed on BBC Radio Five Live that he

had toured St Thomas's - where Florence Nightingale launched nurse training - because he wanted to see what it was like on the "front line". "I went myself to a hospital last night and visited the accident and emergency department and talked to some of the nurses there," he said. "And what they told me was very, very clear. Demands are rising the whole time and they don't think they have the people to cope with it. I am well aware of the problem and I can tell you I am going to address it."

William Hague, the Tory leader, poured scorn on Mr Blair's visit, ridiculing the Prime Minister as "St Tony of Islington", raising comparisons with Diana, Princess of Wales, who was in the habit of making secret late-night visits to hospital wards, including the operating theatre, and visited St Thomas's on at least three occasions. Nurses warned against empty promises on pay. "Promises are not good enough. They are no good to a nurse working long hours for next to nothing," said the Unison spokeswoman.

Parliament, page 8



This orphan pygmy hippo makes her public debut at Whipsnade wild animal park where she is doing well being raised by keepers after her mother died during an emergency Caesarean four weeks ago Fiona Hanson

Heath to register all his interests

BY ANDREW GRICE

SIR EDWARD Heath is to make a "clean breast" of his business interests after allegations that he has breached the rules under which MPs must disclose their work outside Parliament.

In a surprise U-turn, the former Tory prime minister is to amend his entry in the MPs' Register of Interests, revealing four new paid jobs in the new list to be published in March.

However, Sir Edward's rethink will not head off an investigation by Elizabeth Filkin, the Commons standards watchdog who takes up her post next month. Her office has written to Fraser Kemp, a Labour backbencher, saying an inquiry will be launched into Sir Edward's case following a complaint by the MP.

In his current entry in the register, Sir Edward, the longest-serving MP in the House, the only outside post listed is his chairmanship of Dumpton Gap, an unlimited private company.

His new entry will state that he is also a senior adviser to Cosco UK, the British branch of the China Ocean Shipping Company, owned by the Chinese government; a member of the advisory group of the China Index Fund Ltd, run by the insurance group Commercial General Union; an international adviser to Praemium Imperiale, a major arts award backed by Japanese businessmen; and a member of the governing board of the Centre for Global Energy Studies, a London-based think-tank set up by Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani, the former Saudi petroleum minister.

The former prime minister has always argued that he did not need to list the four posts on the grounds that he was not acting in his capacity as an MP when acting as a paid adviser to them. He is said to take seriously the criticism that has been made of his behaviour, but remains confident that he has not breached Commons rules.

Downing Street prize draw leaves Labour in the lurch

BY FRANK ABRAMS
Westminster Correspondent

A SIGHTSEEING trip to Downing Street was offered to Labour supporters as a prize in a fund-raising draw.

The trip was advertised for today but was cancelled amid apparent confusion over whether the Prime Minister's residence had been opened up to visitors.

A Labour spokeswoman claimed that any MP could now take constituents into No 10 under government plans to improve public access, but Downing Street said there was no such facility.

Labour supporters in Liverpool had been invited to pay £40 for a coach trip to the House of

Commons, with a buffet lunch and wine included. The proceeds were to go to Fresh Start for Liverpool, a campaign to get Labour re-elected to the city council, and 12 "lucky winners" of a prize draw would be given a tour of Downing Street.

Jane Kennedy, the Liverpool Wavertree MP who organised the event, said she cancelled it when she saw the leaflet advertising the trip because the prize draw idea added by party staff was "not appropriate". She said she believed MPs could take groups inside No 10,

though not for party fund-raising. "It was just a mistake ... there was nothing sinister."

A Labour spokeswoman said any constituency MP could take invited guests inside Number 10's state rooms, including the Liberal Democrat MP Norman Baker, who wrote to Tony Blair when he heard about the trip, asking when he could take a group from his party.

"He is more than welcome at any time to take Liberal Democrat activists or anybody at all who wants to go into Downing Street," the spokeswoman said. "If he rings up the political office and says he would like to take people round they can

organise it. We were clear that we wanted Downing Street to be a lot more accessible ... It is a public building and this is giving it back to the state."

She was contradicted by a Downing Street spokeswoman who said MPs were not entitled to take groups round, but they could take people to have their pictures taken outside the door if they asked the police in advance. "As far as we are concerned no such tour would be allowed. It is not permissible to use the premises for party fund-raising," she said.

Mr Baker said the idea was "lucky in the extreme".

Lawyers to speak for Chile

THE CHILEAN government will be represented at the new law lords hearing into whether General Augusto Pinochet should face extradition to Spain.

The government in Santiago, which wants the former dictator to be freed, was given permission yesterday to make submissions at the hearing, due to start next week. It will have the right to "intervene", as will the civil rights groups

BY KIM SENGUPTA

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, which want General Pinochet tried.

Lord Browne-Wilkinson, the chairman at yesterday's Lords hearing, confirmed *The Independent's* report that a senior law lord had stepped down from the new panel to judge the case after objections from General Pinochet's lawyers.

A decision that the general does not have immunity from prosecution was set aside by fellow law lords because of Lord Hoffmann's failure to declare his links with Amnesty.

The Independent reported yesterday that Lord Woolf, Master of the Rolls, was not included in the new panel after the general's legal team objected to his fund-raising links with Amnesty. Leading article, Review page 3

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BRITAIN TODAY

KEY

14 Temperature, °C
30 Wind speed, mph and direction

FORECAST

General advice: Scotland and Northern Ireland will start cold with isolated wintry showers. A more organised band of rain will move across, falling as sleet and snow on the hills and mountains. It will again be windy. Isolated showers across Wales, northern and western England this morning will merge, to give some longer periods of rain with snow possible over the mountains. The first of the UK will begin cold but bright with fewer showers, although an increase in cloud is expected later.

Channel Is, Cent S & SE England, London, E England, E Anglia: It will start cold but generally dry with sunny spells before cloud increases this afternoon. A moderate westerly wind. Max temp 5-8°C (41-46°F).

Midlands: A mix of sunny spells and isolated showers this morning. Becoming cloudier with rain moving in later this afternoon. A moderate westerly wind. Max temp 5-8°C (41-46°F).

SW & NW England, Wales, Cent W & NE England, Lake Dist, Isle of Man: Isolated showers this morning. Rain this afternoon with mountain sleet and snow possible. A fresh west to south-westerly wind. Max temp 3-5°C (37-41°F).

N Ireland: Overcast and very windy with heavy rain turning to showers during the afternoon. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 5-7°C (41-45°F).

SW & NW Scotland, Glasgow, W Isles: Rather windy with early showers merging to give some heavy rain. This will fall as sleet and snow over the hills. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 3-5°C (37-41°F).

SE & NE Scotland, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, N Isles: Isolated wintry showers and a few sunny spells; it will then cloud over bringing rain and hill-snow. A strong to gale force west to south-westerly wind. Max temp 3-4°C (37-39°F).

OUTLOOK

It will turn milder in the south and windy across the country with heavy rain spreading south-eastwards. Overnight rain may linger into Saturday morning in the south-east. The rest of the country will turn colder with showers and sunny spells.

TRAVEL

London: A12 Green Man Roundabout, Leytonstone. Major roadworks on new M11 14th Dec. Until 31st Dec. Cambridge: A10 between Foston and M11. Resurfacing and bridge maintenance work at Shepreth Hill. Until 14th February. Bristol: M5 J16-17. Major Roadworks on Avonmouth Bridge. Until 23rd June 2001. Loughs: M6 between 227 Stamford and Loughborough. Roadworks: construction and 50mph speed limit either side of Charnock Road. Until 15th February. Greater Manchester: A57. Narrow lanes Manchester-bound, due to Meritlink construction work. Until 23rd February. South Yorkshire: M1 Between J34 Threlkirk and J43 Threlkirk Viaduct (A177). Sheffield: Cartageway reduced to 2 lanes southbound. Until 21st November 2000. Dumfries and Galloway: A74 between Stranraer and J16 Annan. Major roadworks, until 31st January. Strathclyde: A14 Falkirk Road. Roadworks. Until 23rd February. AA Roadwatchers Call 0336 401777 for the latest local and national traffic news. Source: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 50p per min (inc VAT).

LIGHTING UP

Location	4.27pm to 8.36am	4.27pm to 8.11am	4.29pm to 8.09am	4.13pm to 8.38am	4.19pm to 8.03am	4.18pm to 8.18am	4.07pm to 8.22am
Belfast	4.27pm to 8.36am	4.27pm to 8.11am	4.29pm to 8.09am	4.13pm to 8.38am	4.19pm to 8.03am	4.18pm to 8.18am	4.07pm to 8.22am
Birmingham	4.27pm to 8.36am	4.27pm to 8.11am	4.29pm to 8.09am	4.13pm to 8.38am	4.19pm to 8.03am	4.18pm to 8.18am	4.07pm to 8.22am
Bristol	4.27pm to 8.36am	4.27pm to 8.11am	4.29pm to 8.09am	4.13pm to 8.38am	4.19pm to 8.03am	4.18pm to 8.18am	4.07pm to 8.22am
Cardiff	4.27pm to 8.36am	4.27pm to 8.11am	4.29pm to 8.09am	4.13pm to 8.38am	4.19pm to 8.03am	4.18pm to 8.18am	4.07pm to 8.22am
Edinburgh	4.27pm to 8.36am	4.27pm to 8.11am	4.29pm to 8.09am	4.13pm to 8.38am	4.19pm to 8.03am	4.18pm to 8.18am	4.07pm to 8.22am
Glasgow	4.27pm to 8.36am	4.27pm to 8.11am	4.29pm to 8.09am	4.13pm to 8.38am	4.19pm to 8.03am	4.18pm to 8.18am	4.07pm to 8.22am
Leeds	4.27pm to 8.36am	4.27pm to 8.11am	4.29pm to 8.09am	4.13pm to 8.38am	4.19pm to 8.03am	4.18pm to 8.18am	4.07pm to 8.22am
London	4.27pm to 8.36am	4.27pm to 8.11am	4.29pm to 8.09am	4.13pm to 8.38am	4.19pm to 8.03am	4.18pm to 8.18am	4.07pm to 8.22am
Manchester	4.27pm to 8.36am	4.27pm to 8.11am	4.29pm to 8.09am	4.13pm to 8.38am	4.19pm to 8.03am	4.18pm to 8.18am	4.07pm to 8.22am
Newcastle	4.27pm to 8.36am	4.27pm to 8.11am	4.29pm to 8.09am	4.13pm to 8.38am	4.19pm to 8.03am	4.18pm to 8.18am	4.07pm to 8.22am

HIGH TIDES

Location	AM	PM	MT
Bournemouth	4.39 10.8	5.02 11.1	5.48
Cork	3.03 3.8	3.28 3.8	3.8
Dumport	3.09 4.8	3.33 4.8	3.8
Dunfermline	3.51 5.7	9.21 5.8	3.8
Dun Laoghaire	9.27 3.6	9.51 3.6	3.8
Falmouth	2.40 4.6	3.04 4.6	3.8
Glasgow	10.38 3.0	10.40 2.9	3.8
Harwich	9.33 3.3	10.00 3.4	3.8
Holyhead	8.17 4.9	8.38 4.8	3.8
Howth	8.59 8.0	9.22 8.1	3.8
Leeds	4.06 5.2	4.38 5.5	3.8
Lough Linn	12.12 4.5	12.32 4.8	3.8
Lough Neagh	8.59 8.0	9.22 8.1	3.8
London	3.54 5.7	4.16 5.8	3.8
Portsmouth	2.50 5.7	3.11 5.8	3.8
Portsmouth	4.27 1.5	4.42 1.5	3.8
Portsmouth	8.15 4.1	9.48 4.1	3.8
Portsmouth	5.37 3.8	6.17 3.8	3.8
Scarborough	1.47 4.8	2.15 5.0	3.8
Wales	9.09 3.1	9.32 3.1	3.8

AIR QUALITY

Today's readings

Location	NO ₂	SO ₂	Good
London	Good	Good	Good
Wales	Good	Good	Good
C England	Good	Good	Good
N England	Good	Good	Good
Scotland	Good	Good	Good
N Ireland	Good	Good	Good

SUN & MOON

Sun rises: 08.01
Sun sets: 16.19
Moon rises: 04.35
Moon sets: 13.59
New moon: 17 Jan

WEATHERLINE

For the latest forecasts dial 0891 5009 followed by the two digits for your area. Source: The Met. Office. Calls charged at 50p per min (inc VAT).

YESTERDAY

EXTREMES

Warmest: Culdrose, Cornwall 10C (50F)
Coldest: (day): L. Glascock, 1C (34F)
Winnipeg, Manitoba, 0.11C
Seaside, Marston, Kent, 2.5 hrs
For 24 hours to 2pm Wednesday

Location	5m	1h	2h	3h	4h	5h	6h	7h	8h	9h	10h	11h	12h	13h	14h	15h	16h	17h	18h	19h	20h	21h	22h	23h	24h
Aberdeen	1.3	0.20	3	37																					
Adelaide	1.3	0.20	3	37																					
Amsterdam	1.3	0.20	3	37																					
Antwerp	1.3	0.20	3	37																					
Athens	1.3	0.20	3	37																					
Bahia	1.3	0.20	3	37																					
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Run-down, sprawling and decayed. Are our cities the worst in Europe?

BY NICHOLAS SCHOON

BRITAIN'S CITIES are among the worst in Europe and face the threat of falling into run-away decay. That vision was outlined yesterday by Lord Rogers of Riverside, now the nation's most influential architect, in a report to the Government.

The key to preventing such a fate lies in the hands of the middle classes, who are leaving cities to seek a better life. If this continues and owner-occupied suburbs continue to sprawl out into the countryside, there is a danger of entire neighbourhoods becoming deserted. The solution, says Lord Rogers, would be compact, attractive urban quarters where people can walk to the shops, work and play. But this will work only if the middle classes can be persuaded once again to live near the centre instead of in "soulless, alienated" suburbs.

Sharing the Vision, produced by the Urban Task Force, which is made up of figures from the development industry, big city councils and academia, says the threat of further decline comes partly from concentrations of poverty in the big cities, bringing crime, disorder and family breakdown.

Lord Rogers, the taskforce chairman, said: "We have seen a worsening of the quality of life in our cities. They have fallen from near the top of the European league to near the bottom. Bad cities brutalise people and they wish to escape from them."

Council and housing association homes for low-income tenants must mix with owner-occupied housing. "We want a situation where you can't see the difference between social and market housing," said Lord Rogers, designer of the Millennium Dome.

Britain's planners, architects and developers are also at fault for the dismal state of Britain's cities. "There is quite clearly a lack of skills," he said. "I'm particularly conscious of this when I go abroad - there has been a general run-down of our skills. We must move away from the idea that building is a matter of making a fast buck."

Averting the creation of urban ghettos comes at a high price. "An urban renaissance is not going to come easily or cheaply," says the report. Sweeping changes in taxation, legislation and Britain's anti-urban culture will be needed. "The Government, in partnership with the private sector, is going to have to do much more."

Part of the answer is "to drastically limit suburban sprawl and out-of-town development", says the interim report. It welcomes moves already made in this direction, but says: "Much more needs to be done to make it harder and more expensive to develop out of town." Public transport should be favoured above the car "to minimise pollution and congestion".

Lord Rogers and the taskforce's secretary, Jon Rouse,



Lord Rogers, who gave a dire warning that Britain's cities faced the threat of terminal decay

John Voos

will say little about their final recommendations. There is intense debate within the group about what these should be.

But they will certainly include new ways of raising finance for urban regeneration, such as tax-breaks for developers, and changes in compulsory purchase powers for councils to make it easier for them to buy blighted land for redevelopment. The taskforce is also expected to recommend new incentives for owning and restoring homes in urban areas, although it denied reports that it favoured removing the tax relief on mortgages for homes built on greenfield sites.

The report says the bad reputation of inner-city state schools are identified as one of the key factors driving home owners out of inner cities. But it also concludes there is a deep seated anti-urban culture. "The English are an urban people who prefer to live in a mock-up of the coun-

tryside." Up to 5 million extra homes are needed over the next 25 years, mainly because people are living longer and spending more years living alone. The task force believes most, but not all, of these will have to be built within existing towns and cities, in ways that enhance rather than overcrowd them. Lord Rogers said about a third would probably have to be built on greenfield sites. The report warns that a mass of new housing was "urbanism on a mega-scale which, if not well planned, could destroy both existing towns and the countryside".

John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, said the kind of cities the taskforce envisaged would have a much-improved environment and far fewer problems of poverty.

But he was attacked by the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE), represented on the taskforce, for continuing to allow massive

new greenfield housing developments. Tony Burton, of the council, said: "The taskforce is being undermined by continuing allocation of greenfield sites for thousands of new houses, and the Government's failure to support reduced house-building plans in pressured areas of rural England."

Tonight Lord Rogers flies to the Netherlands with Mr Prescott. He will be showing the Deputy Prime Minister some examples of Dutch urban regeneration, which he believes are far in advance of British practice.

Yesterday Mr Prescott warmly welcomed the report, the final version of which will be produced later this year alongside a long list of recommendations.

What remains to be seen is whether the Treasury and 10 Downing Street will rise to the challenge of making suburban "Sierra Man" learn to love European-style urban living.

URBAN LIFE IN BRITAIN AND FRANCE



LYON

Population: 416,000 (city).
1,963,941 (conurbation)

Public transport: Three high-speed train stations. International airport, metro system, buses.

New developments: Expanding conference centre, new Hilton hotel and casino, plan to divert major motorway around city, planned museum of technology.

Deprivation: High unemployment and poverty in high-rise suburbs around city.

THE LATEST proof that the 1,963,941 people in France's second city cannot be wrong came in October, when the Mayor of Lyon, Raymond Barre, asked to borrow 100m francs (£10m) for improvements. In two weeks all "Lyon 2000" bonds had been bought.

Yet, according to a survey by the council, most Lyonnais believe they pay too much tax to an ill-organised adminis-

tration. And, in common with the most Continental metropolises, the concept of inner-city deprivation is unknown on the bourgeois streets of Lyon, which has a metro and buses, three high-speed train stations and plans for trams.

The trouble is in the suburbs: greater Lyon has some of the most violent high-rise slums in France, where unemployment reaches 25 per cent among second-genera-

tion North African youths. The average joblessness figure for Lyon is 12 per cent.

Twinned with Birmingham since 1951, Lyon is only now losing the 's' which for years inexplicably plagued its ending in English orthography.

This summer, as part of an ever-improving partnership between the cities, "Lyon Week" will be held in Birmingham.

ALEX DUVAL SMITH



BIRMINGHAM

Population: Birmingham City - 989,000.
West Midlands conurbation - 2.7 million.

Public transport: InterCity train service. International airport. Suburban railway network. In spring a £145m section of its overground metro opens. Buses.

New developments: International Convention Centre, Symphony Hall.

Deprivation: England's fifth most deprived council area, after Liverpool, Newham (in London), Manchester and Hackney.

BIRMINGHAM'S CITY centre has been transformed by ambitious and highly praised new developments during the Nineties.

But its council admits that Britain's second city still has a long way to go. The core is largely surrounded by run down inner city wards where poverty is concentrated.

According to a recent Government report, it ranks as the

fifth most deprived council area in England.

The upwardly mobile still tend to move out of Birmingham if they can and yet, compared to other big British cities, such as Liverpool and Glasgow, Birmingham's population has declined much less rapidly, and its problems of deprivation are not as severe.

There is a boom in city centre living, with thousands of

new apartments being built.

The council is teaming up with developers to erase the worst of the grim Sixties developments. And it is breaking through the "concrete collar" of the inner ring road which cut Birmingham's centre off from the rest of the city. The hope is that this regeneration can spread into the run down neighbourhoods beyond.

NICHOLAS SCHOON

Even our poorest areas have sense of civic pride

SINCE WRITING *Cities for a Small Planet* Lord Rogers has taken to wearing bicycle clips during lectures. It gets everyone's attention when he points out that when cars overrun the city we will not be able to breathe properly, let alone travel anywhere. His favourite slide at these lectures shows small boys playing football on a grassed-over street between rows of terraced houses.

So Lord Rogers comes from a very special position when, as chairman of the Government's Urban Task Force, he claims that "the overall quality of life in English cities has been diminishing for a long time and compares very poorly with other European cities".

John Gummer, former environment secretary, would not agree. "It's a very difficult case to uphold," he says. "First of all English homes have significantly greater space than Continental homes - a third again. The anecdotal evidence is simple. When we went to look at British council-owned property in the last government we as-



NONIE NIESEWAND

sumed one spare bedroom was proper for each household. Not one other country in Europe would accept that. Or as much garden space."

Even poor boroughs have a sense of civic pride. Try telling the residents of Hackney in north-east London, with their contemporary art studios and galleries, that they are living in an ugly, sprawling area. Or the residents of nearby Tower Hamlets that they do not have a neighbourhood.

Newcastle is now so fashionable that advertising agencies try out new products on the locals. Tell the residents that

they would be better off living in Lyons. There isn't a Geordie who would swap.

This doomwatch comes at a time when Britain is seen as the hottest - or coolest, depending on your terminology - country in Europe.

The Netherlands shaped up much better than Britain when Lord Rogers took a fact-finding tour there. What impressed him was a mix of low-income families living in two-storey homes mixed with larger apartment blocks around a square which doubles as school playground. He was also impressed by the "high" level of rehabilitation of older terraced properties, as well as Amsterdam's car-free housing programme.

And the key to it all, says Lord Rogers, is quality not quantity, which upholds that old egalitarian modernist maxim "less is more".

Yet the Urban Task Force has to advise the Government which needs more than 4 million new households by 2016. That is about twice the number of dwellings currently in Lon-

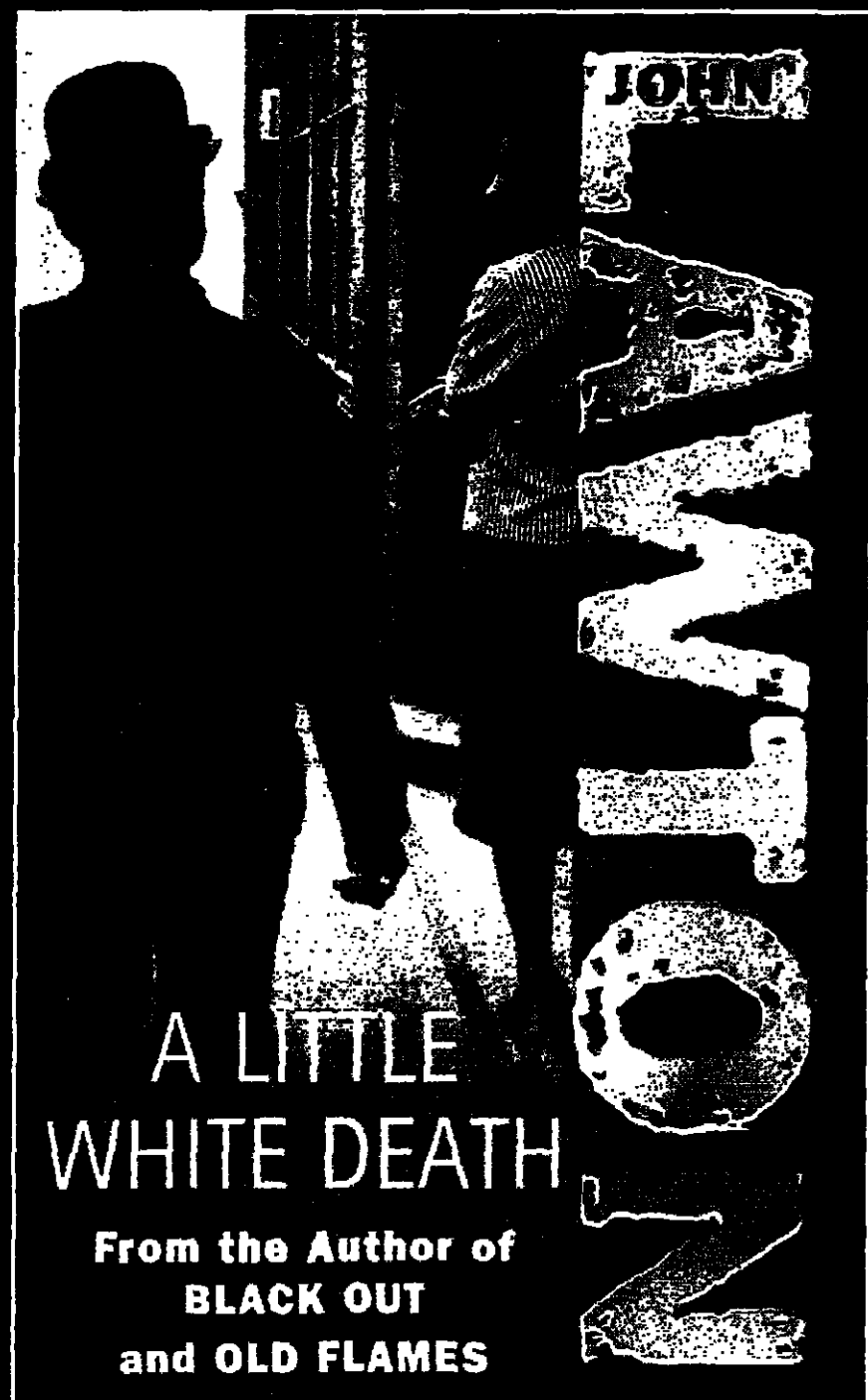
don, or more than 45 times those of Milton Keynes.

"This is urbanism on a mega scale which, if not well planned, could destroy both existing towns and the countryside," the Urban Task Force warns. So they are looking at regenerating city centres which, it is true, are bleaker than their European counterparts.

When technological change emptied textile mills and telephone exchanges, factories and warehouses in our post-industrial cities, we let them rot. In Paris they turned them into chic loft-living with a fashionable address. Entrepreneurial is French for far-sighted.

The new Tate Gallery at Bankside in London will be housed in the old power station 25 years after the French put their Impressionist collection inside an old train shed at the Quai d'Orsay. But then, as John Gummer says: "Success in France is measured by having an address in the best arrondissement in Paris. In Britain it's a vicarage in the country."

'Unputdownable narrative of spying, sexual intrigue, political scandal and murder...
a haunting novel' A.N.WILSON, DAILY TELEGRAPH



4/HOME NEWS

Kidnap gang leader confesses

BY FRANK GARDNER
in Aden

THE LEADER of the militant Islamist kidnappers who seized 16 Western tourists in Yemen last month admitted in court yesterday kidnapping them and using them as human shields. He boasted that he "abducted the infidels because their governments attacked Muslims indiscriminately".

Britons Ruth Williamson, 34, Margaret Whitehouse, 52, Peter Rowe, 60 and Australian Andrew Thirsk, 35, were killed in a botched rescue attempt on 29 December.

Zein al-Abidine al-Mihdar - also known as Abu Hassan - the leader of the group, and the brothers Ahmed Mohammed Atif and Saad Mohammed Atif, were charged with kidnapping in a heavily guarded Yemeni court.

Far from denying the charge of kidnap, which carries the death penalty in Yemen, Mr Al-Mihdar shouted defiantly that his group had done everything in the name of God and that he had no regrets.

The Yemeni authorities were clearly nervous that some of the thousands of well-armed supporters that Mr Al-Mihdar claims to have would choose this moment to spring him from captivity.

The tiny Yemeni coastal town of Zinjibar had never seen such a display of security. In the bustling market place, where camels ambled past veiled women who sat around in the heat, uniformed police were spaced at 50-yard intervals.

Outside the court house, soldiers manned enormous Russian machine guns on the backs of pick-up trucks. When the closed white van drew up with the three defendants inside, there was chaos as police tried to prevent photographs being taken. The men emerged, blinking in the harsh sunlight, before being jostled into the court room in handcuffs.

After brief formalities, the men were read their charges,



Lawrence Whitehouse at Long Sutton Primary School for a service for his wife, Margaret, a former teacher at the school Tim Ockenden

which including executing a campaign of bombing, kidnapping and killing in Southern Yemen. No mention was made of the five Britons detained in Aden, whom the Yemeni government has been claiming are linked to the kidnappers. Yemen's ambassador has made clear that the five have not yet been charged, the Foreign Office said last night.

Mr Al-Mihdar then delivered a calm and terrifying dia-

tribe in Arabic against the West, Christianity and rulers such as President Bill Clinton. He said he and his followers were trying to breach the blockade against Muslims by Britain, America, France and their allies. "Are we going to see the cross raised in this region," he asked the court rhetorically, "or the [Muslim] crescent? We are going to break the cross in this country and the same blood that was spilt in

Afghanistan will be spilt against the Crusaders."

Sniffing frequently as if the trial was all a huge game, Mr Al-Mihdar gave his blow-by-blow version of the shoot-out in which four of his hostages died and two were injured. He denied killing any himself, but freely admitted using them as human shields against the advancing government troops. "God sent them to us, so we took them," he said. "We kid-

napped them to fight their countries because they don't believe in God or our Prophet."

Mr Al-Mihdar was visibly aware that he has little chance of escaping execution and has even refused a defence lawyer. In the half-hour recess, he chatted amicably to journalists and even his government captors. We asked him if he knew the five Britons detained in Aden on suspicion of terrorism. He replied: "No." He also denied

knowing the British radical Muslim cleric, Abu Hamza Al-Misri, who told said this week that the kidnappers had called him last month.

Before the court adjourned until after the Islamic Eid holiday next week, the leader of the kidnappers issued a chilling call to his followers. "For those who are still at large," he said, "I hope they will continue the Jihad against the Crusaders. May God strike you all."

Families of 'Chechen Four' want truth

FOREIGN Office minister Tony Lloyd was last night under growing pressure to explain the full details of the Government's dealings with the four engineers who were murdered in Chechnya last month.

Yesterday *The Independent* revealed that, despite publicly insisting it had advised the men not to travel there, it had actually asked them to report back on conditions in Chechnya. The developments came as the family of one of the victims, Darren Hickey, prepare to bury the

BY ANDREW BUNCOMBE

26-year-old at a Roman Catholic Church in Kingston, Surrey today. Mr Hickey's sister Deborah, said yesterday: "It's hypocritical of the Foreign Office. When the men were killed they were blaming Granger Telecom. They knew that this had been going on."

Yesterday Tory foreign affairs spokeswoman Cheryl Gillan demanded a full explanation of what the Government had said to Granger Telecom,

which employed three of the men. Yesterday she wrote to Mr Lloyd saying: "You refer to the department's 'formal advice'. This begs the question as to whether informal advice was given. You also pose a series of questions which would give the impression to any reasonable person that you were more than content to allow Granger's work to continue."

"The tone of the letter clearly could be interpreted as informal encouragement to the company to ... provide infor-

mation to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office."

Three of the men, Rudolf Petschi, 42, Darren Hickey and Stanley Shaw, 58, were employed by Granger to install mobile telephone equipment. A fourth, Peter Kennedy 46, worked for British Telecom.

After the men were kidnapped, in October last year, the Foreign Office insisted that its advice had been not to travel to Chechnya. After they were executed, Mr Lloyd told the Commons, that the advice had

been "clear and unambiguous". But in a letter written last August, the Foreign Office said that since the company was in Chechnya it would "welcome" its views on the opportunities for investment, the influential people in the republic and any information about Jon James and Camilla Carr, two British aid workers who were being held hostage in Chechnya.

Peter Kennedy's MP Liberal Democrat Paul Keetch, said yesterday he did not think there was anything wrong with asking the company to report back on Ms Carr and Mr James. But he added: "There is a need for an inquiry, not only into what was said but on the whole issue of travel advice given to people travelling to dangerous places."

A Foreign Office spokesman refused to say whether any information was passed to the intelligence services but said it would have been "irresponsible in the extreme" not to ask about Mr James and Ms Carr.

Leading article. Review page 3

DNA 'robot' could repair body tissue

BY STEVE CONNOR
Science Editor

SCIENTISTS HAVE built a "gene machine" out of DNA which could form the basis of a robot small enough to be injected into the body to repair tissues.

A breakthrough in building DNA molecules that can be moved at will might be the forerunner of robots which could patrol the body in a similar way to the submarine adventure in the film *Fantastic Voyage*. A robotic arm has been made of DNA molecules in an attempt to build machines for chemical factories so small that hundreds could fit on a pin-head.

Some scientists envisage that more advanced versions of the robots could guard the body, seeking and destroying invading microbes, scraping furred-up arteries and repairing tissues ravaged by ageing. The robotic arm is thousands of times smaller than the smallest metal cogs and wheels, themselves only visible under a microscope, that have been made as part of research into nano-technology.

The devices are on the scale of a millionth of a millimetre. Scientists at New York University, led by Nadrian Seeman, a chemistry professor, built the arm of a nano-robot out of strands of DNA, the chemical blueprint of organisms, which has the innate abil-



'Fantastic Voyage': Not so far-fetched a concept now

ity to replicate itself. "Using synthetic DNA ... we have constructed a controllable molecular-mechanical system ... In the long term the work will have implications for the development of nano-scale robots and for molecular manufacturing," Professor Seeman said.

His team has already made static devices from DNA but this is believed to be the first time anyone has produced a moving structure from a biological molecule.

A more immediate goal of the research is to place nano-robots on a "production line" to make complex substances, such as genetically engineered drugs, that are now made by micro-organisms.

Professor Seeman said there are still formidable obstacles to using roving robots in the body but it is the kind of futuristic application many people are thinking about.

IN BRIEF

Poor 'need savings scheme help'

A LOW-COST current account offered through the Post Office and flexible financial products are needed to help poor consumers avoid being driven to loan sharks, the Office of Fair Trading said today. The watchdog said in a report that millions of people on low-incomes and benefits were being excluded from essential financial services.

Drunken pair on airport runway

A DRUNKEN couple were arrested after walking into the path of an incoming aircraft at Manchester airport. The pilot was forced to circle for 15 minutes on Tuesday as police removed Wayne Wormald of Manchester and Jacqueline Wasicki of Chesham Hill and charged them with trespassing and endangering the safety of an aircraft.

Jobless interviews condemned

GOVERNMENT PLANS to make jobless single parents and the disabled attend interviews or lose benefits were condemned. Mencap said interviewers would not be able to communicate with people with learning difficulties and the National Council for One-Parent Families said it could make parents put work ahead of responsibilities as parents.

Speed-up in air pollution curbs

THE GOVERNMENT yesterday announced an accelerated crackdown on air pollution, but admitted that it could not meet its current target to reduce the pollutants regarded as the most health-threatening - particulates. These microscopic particles emitted by lorries and buses are thought to account for thousands of deaths a year.

Crisis in Ulster hospitals

A CRISIS meeting was held in Belfast last night as more than 80 patients waited in hospitals across Northern Ireland for emergency surgery for broken bones. Local Health minister John McFall has admitted there is a shortage of orthopaedic surgeons in the province and said more would be recruited.

ANN TRENEMAN

Unconditional love is a pretty hard thing to come by these days

IN THE THURSDAY REVIEW PAGE 5

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Guildford	£108	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	£84
Havant*	£96	Preston	£84
Hemel Hempstead	£88	Sheffield	£90
Maldstone/Sevenoaks	£88	Teesside*	£82
Plymouth	£98	Wakefield	£82
Portsmouth*	£100	Warrington/Runcorn	£88
Reading	£92	Washington*	£80
Rochester	£84	York	£90
South Mimms	£96	East of England	3 nights
Southampton*	£96	Basildon	£78
Southampton/Eastleigh*	£92	Brentwood	£108
Swindon	£90	Cambridge	£96
Taunton	£90	Colchester	£92
Central England	3 nights	Epping	£90
Aylesbury	£88	Ipswich	£88
Birmingham	£78	Norwich	£88
Birmingham Airport	£114	Peterborough	£78
Birmingham City*	£90	Stevenage	£84
Coventry	£88		
Derby/Burton*	£92		
Gloucester	£90		
High Wycombe	£78		
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Inspectors want 'setting' for 5-year-olds

PUTTING CHILDREN as young as five in school sets helps to raise standards, inspectors said yesterday.

A survey of 400,000 lessons and 900 schools backs the Government's belief that children achieve more if they are grouped by ability for different subjects. Setting is different from streaming in which pupils of similar ability are taught together for all subjects.

The proportion of setted lessons in primary schools has doubled to 4 per cent in a year. An analysis of more than 20 major studies recently found that setting and streaming made no difference to pupils' achievement. Children in the bottom sets tended to give up and some of the brighter ones became over-confident about their ability, said the report from the National Foundation for Educational Research.

But inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education said that nearly all of the schools inspected "demonstrated a clear trend of rising standards for pupils of all abilities once the use of setting had been established".

BY JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

ities once the use of setting had been established".

The report argued that there was no reason why some setting should not be used, particularly in maths, from the age of five or six, provided that it was sensitively organised.

Inspectors visited more than 50 schools and found that national test scores in setted subjects improved "in some cases spectacularly" between 1996 and 1997.

However, the report warned that setting did not compensate for poor teaching and must be carefully planned. Schools needed to build in safeguards to avoid "the low-esteem and the negative labelling of pupils which can occur in lower sets".

But inspectors found no evidence that pupils in the bottom sets were badly motivated and badly behaved. "The vast majority of pupils see advantages to setting, accept the purpose and fairness of their allocation to a particular set and like

having more than one teacher".

A postal survey of 900 schools found that six out of ten junior schools and more than a third of infant schools used sets for at least one subject. Maths was most commonly setted. Pupils of different ages were taught together in two-thirds of the schools that used sets for maths and one-quarter of those that used sets for English. Boys tended to predominate in the bottom sets and inspectors said schools were not doing enough to discover the reasons.

Schools took into account aptitude and interest as well as test scores when they allocated children to sets. The report pointed out that only a handful of pupils appeared to transfer sets, up or down, and warned that setting needed to be flexible.

Of the schools that used sets, 96 per cent did for maths, 69 per cent for English and 9 per cent for science. A very few also set for French and music and for team games in physical education.

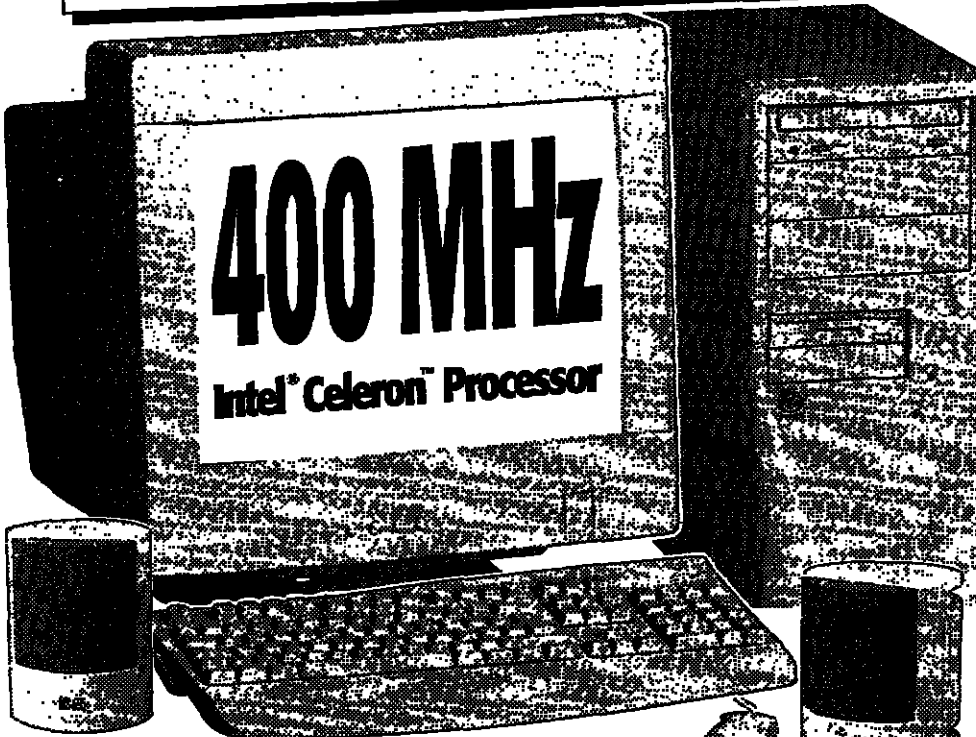


Government inspectors believe that grouping pupils by ability for different subjects causes standards to rise

Martin Rickett

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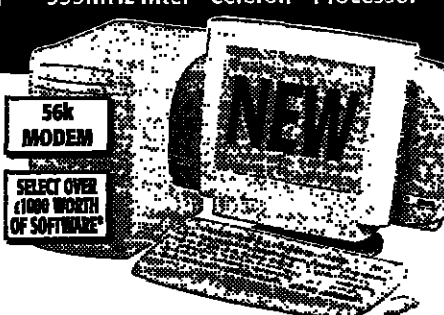
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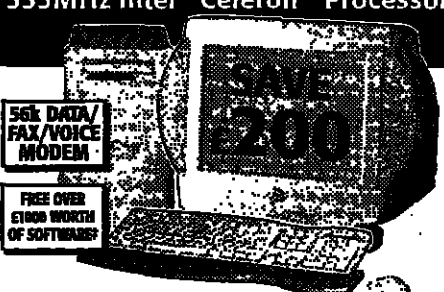


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Firm to bid for hundreds of schools

AN AMERICAN-INSPIRED company has plans to take over hundreds of state schools and run them for profit, its head has disclosed. The Education Partnership, which is bidding to manage the first school to be put out to tender, said it hoped to build a network of privately managed schools running into three figures within five years.

James Tooley, a right-wing Newcastle University academic whose ideas include replacing A-levels and GCSEs with IQ tests and lowering the school-leaving age to 14, is chairman of the Education Partnership, a company closely linked with the New York-based Edison Project, an enterprise that aims to turn round inner-city schools for profit.

Education Partnership is a leading contender in the race to take over King's Manor School, Guildford. Four bidders will present proposals to Surrey County Council next week. Professor Tooley said: "Our ambition is that King's Manor will be just the first of the schools we would take over. There are 25,000 schools in the country and we would like to see most of those as private institutions." The company would be "trail-blazing" ideas pioneered in the US by Edison, which runs 50 schools, using advanced technology, aggressive target-setting and zero tolerance of failure.

Professor Tooley, whose report last year on educational research infuriated academics, said his company would also be registering interest in taking over local authority services after David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, said that failing councils would have their functions put out to tender.

Education Partnership includes Gareth Newman, head of Brooke Weston City Technology College, in Corby, Northamptonshire, one of the pioneering specialist schools set up by the Conservatives to harness private investment for

BY BEN RUSSELL
Education Correspondent

education, and World ORT, an international Jewish training group that has an extensive Internet operation.

Andrew Povey, the Surrey education chairman, said: "We are looking for somebody to come up with new ideas who will make a difference to this particular situation."

Surrey has been backed by the Tory education spokesman, David Willetts.

It represents a problem for



Tooley: 'King's Manor will be just the first'

Mr Blunkett, who said schools will not be run for profit but has accepted that private firms can offer management expertise in the same way as they provide school meals, cleaning and other services.

The largest teaching union, the National Union of Teachers, said it would not rule out legal action to prevent King's Manor being taken over. Doug McAvoy, the general secretary, said the local authority had to be responsible for turning round a school.

Other companies bidding for King's Manor also expressed interest in taking over failing local authority services. Contenders include Nord Anglia and CEBT, both leading educational consultancies and providers of school services.

PC jailed for stealing pensioner's savings

A POLICE officer was jailed for nine months yesterday for stealing £700 from the savings of an 83-year-old widow who asked him for crime prevention advice.

PC Ken Davies, 44, took the cash from Doris Midwood after he visited her flat in Shipley, West Yorkshire, several times to give her "safe tips" in which to keep her cash. Davies was the local community constable.

In a three-day trial at Leeds Crown Court the officer, who

was described as "decent and honest" by colleagues, said he took the cash because he was under stress after several deaths in the family and immediately wanted to return it.

Judge Robert Taylor told him: "This was a very serious offence. It involved a grave breach of trust and taking advantage of an elderly and vulnerable person who was looking to you to advise and protect her."

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Six clocks in Nash Court, Canary Wharf, London, by designer Konstantin Grcic, will be seen by commuters as they leave the main entrance of the Jubilee line tube station due to be completed later this year. Philip Meech

Fewer than three in ten viewers watching BBC1

THE CONTINUED growth of satellite television and the success of Channel 5 have combined to push BBC1's audience share below the 30 per cent mark for the first time.

According to official industry figures to be published shortly, BBC1's share fell to 29.5 per cent in 1998 from 30.8 per cent the previous year, a decline almost matched by ITV, which slipped back by 1.2 percentage points to 31.7 per cent.

The drop comes at a sensitive time for the corporation as it sets about convincing both the Government and public of the validity of the universal licence fee in the multi-channel age. Chris Smith, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, has just appointed a panel headed by the economist Gavyn Davies to advise on setting the level of the fee until 2006.

"You've got to put the fall in the context of 19 new channels coming on stream and a further 12 doing massive relaunches," said a BBC spokeswoman.

BY RHYS WILLIAMS

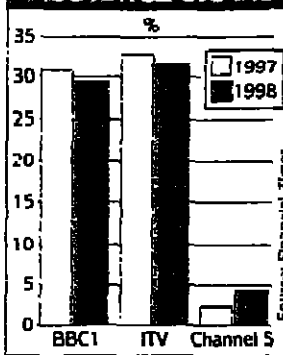
"You've also got the first real effect of Channel 5 being felt."

In any case, the BBC will argue, the corporation exists as a public service broadcaster to provide programmes that other networks do not offer in peak-time such as *The Life of Birds*, *The Human Body* or current affairs reports such as *Panorama*. "Our differentiation is our programming," added the spokeswoman. "We are all about quality and diversity although obviously we would like to show that to as wide an audience as possible."

Although Sir John Birt, the BBC's director-general, has consistently warned that audiences will inevitably decline as channels proliferate, the corporation is acutely aware that the lower its share, the more challenging it becomes to argue for a fee levied on every household.

This was one of the chief concerns underpinning the conflict between BBC Broadcast, which

AUDIENCE SHARE



commissions programmes for BBC1 and 2, and BBC News over the recent revamp of the main network's news output.

Conscious that bulletins provided soft spots in peak time against which commercial rivals could schedule popular programming, BBC Broadcast was keen to boost the appeal of the news with more "audience-friendly" presenters such as Jill Dando.

The other likely worry for Sir John is that cable and satellite's gain has so far been, for the most

part, ITV's pain. But there is now evidence that ITV's rate of decline is slowing. Under a new management team appointed last year, ITV secured a 37.9 per cent share of viewing between 7pm and 10.30pm, compared with a target of 38 per cent.

The BBC can take some comfort from the fact that BBC2 has held up comparatively well. It slipped back by 0.3 points to 11.3 per cent in 1998, allowing the BBC's overall share to stay above 40 per cent and retain its place as the nation's leading broadcaster. With Channel 4 also retreating (by 0.3 points to 10.3), only one terrestrial network - Channel 5 - increased its audience.

At the end of 1998 (its first full calendar year on air), Channel 5 nearly doubled its share from 2.3 per cent in 1997 to 4.3 per cent as its mixture of movies beginning at the 9pm watershed and selected sports events such as Chelsea's Cup Winners' Cup campaign last season appears to be paying dividends.

One HQ plan for all 999 services

RADICAL PLANS to create joint headquarters for police, fire and ambulance services across the United Kingdom are being drawn up by the Government in an attempt to improve emergency response times.

Pilot schemes for joint 999 call centres and shared buildings for the three emergency services were unveiled yesterday as part of a £120m drive to "revolutionise" public services.

Jack Cunningham, the Cabinet Office minister, and Alan Milburn, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, announced a raft of new projects aimed at saving time and money for the public. More than 33 schemes to encourage better co-ordination between different Whitehall departments and agencies were unveiled under the Government's Invest to Save programme over the next three years.

Joint centres for police, fire and ambulance services are aimed at saving life-saving minutes in response times, as well as cutting costs by getting the three services to co-operate.

The services would not merge all their facilities, but key infrastructure such as vehicle maintenance and telephone call centres would come under one roof. More than £7.8m has been set aside by the Department of Health to create three pilot projects for the new 999 services.

Elizabeth Neville, Chief Constable of Wiltshire Police and one of the bidders for the cash, said that joint centres could save "life-saving minutes" by enabling a more flexible response to emergencies on a "one call brings them all" basis.

Wiltshire already has some police cars fitted with defibril-

BY PAUL WAUGH
Political Correspondent

lators, which can save heart attack victims' lives if applied in time. They patrol areas of the county which ambulances find it hardest to get to, she said.

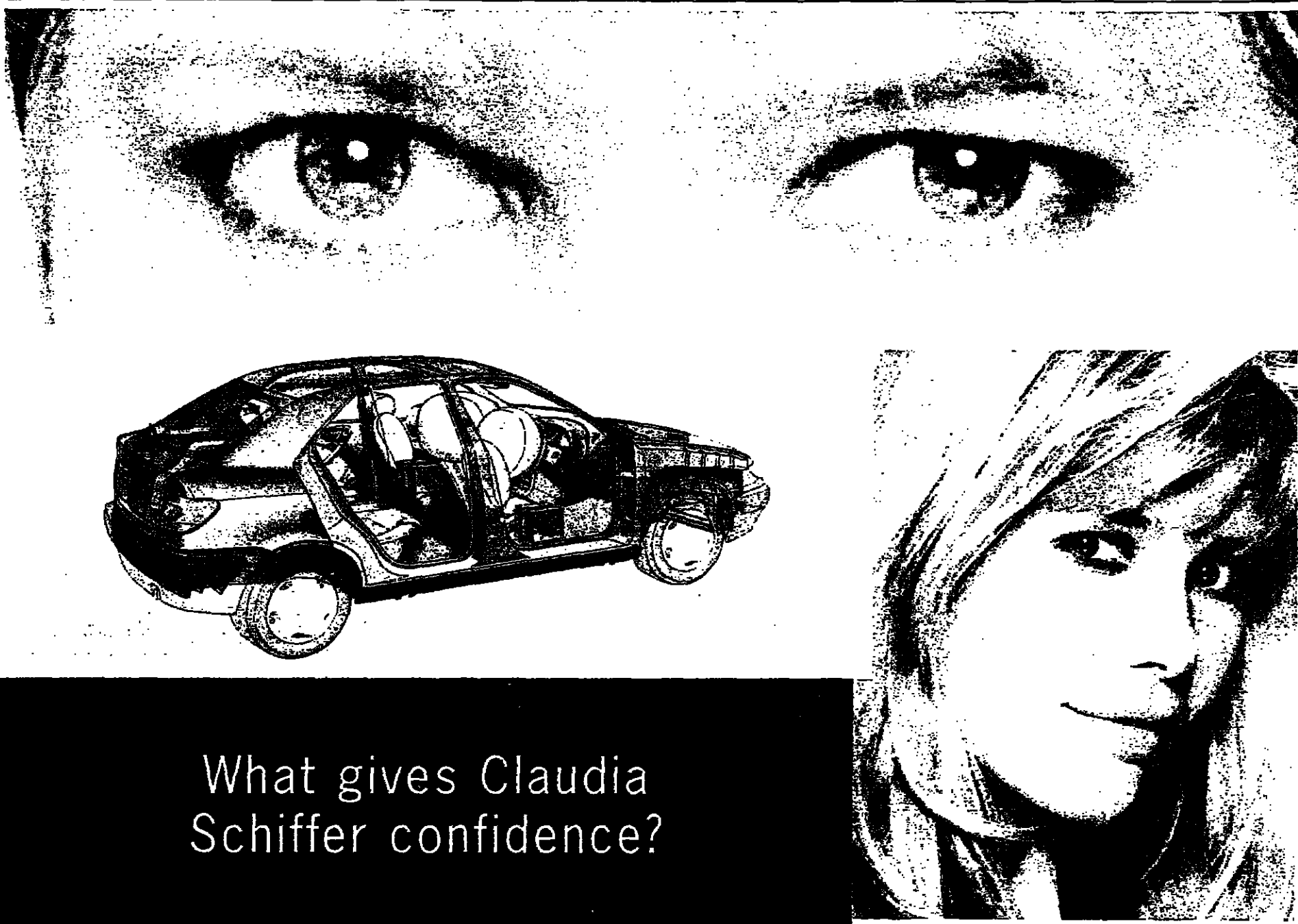
Frank Dobson, Secretary of State for Health, said yesterday he had been pushing the idea of joint call centres for the emergency services for some time.

"The taxpayer can't be expected to pay out three times over and we must look for the best deal for all three services. This means looking at joint control and communication systems," he said.

"The acid test must be better services for patients and the public." Other innovative schemes being backed by ministers include projects to cut house-buying times by linking all conveyancing agencies on the Internet, and a Scottish scheme to rehabilitate young offenders.

Dr Cunningham revealed he will publish a White Paper in the spring setting out Labour's vision for "radical modernisation" of public services. The paper would spell out the need for more strategic, long-term policy-making across departments, exploiting new technology to improve services and improving civil servants' performance through a new Civil Service Management College.

Half the schemes announced yesterday are pilot projects, to identify the scope for savings, which are said to be potentially "quite substantial". The other half are ready to start and are expected to save about £30m over the next three years.



Warren agrees to pay King £7.2m

BOXING PROMOTER Frank Warren agreed to pay US rival Don King £7.2million to end their partnership and settle their differences yesterday.

Mr Warren, who has had his business assets frozen by the High Court, has been locked into an acrimonious legal row as he sought to extricate himself from their four-year partnership.

He had not been able to stage key fights since the row began over a dispute over separate US TV rights negotiated outside of the Warren-King partnership for Prince Naseem Hamed.

Last night, the hefty pay-out seemed to melt the ice between two of the sport's craftiest fixers. Mr King, who will receive his cash in instalments

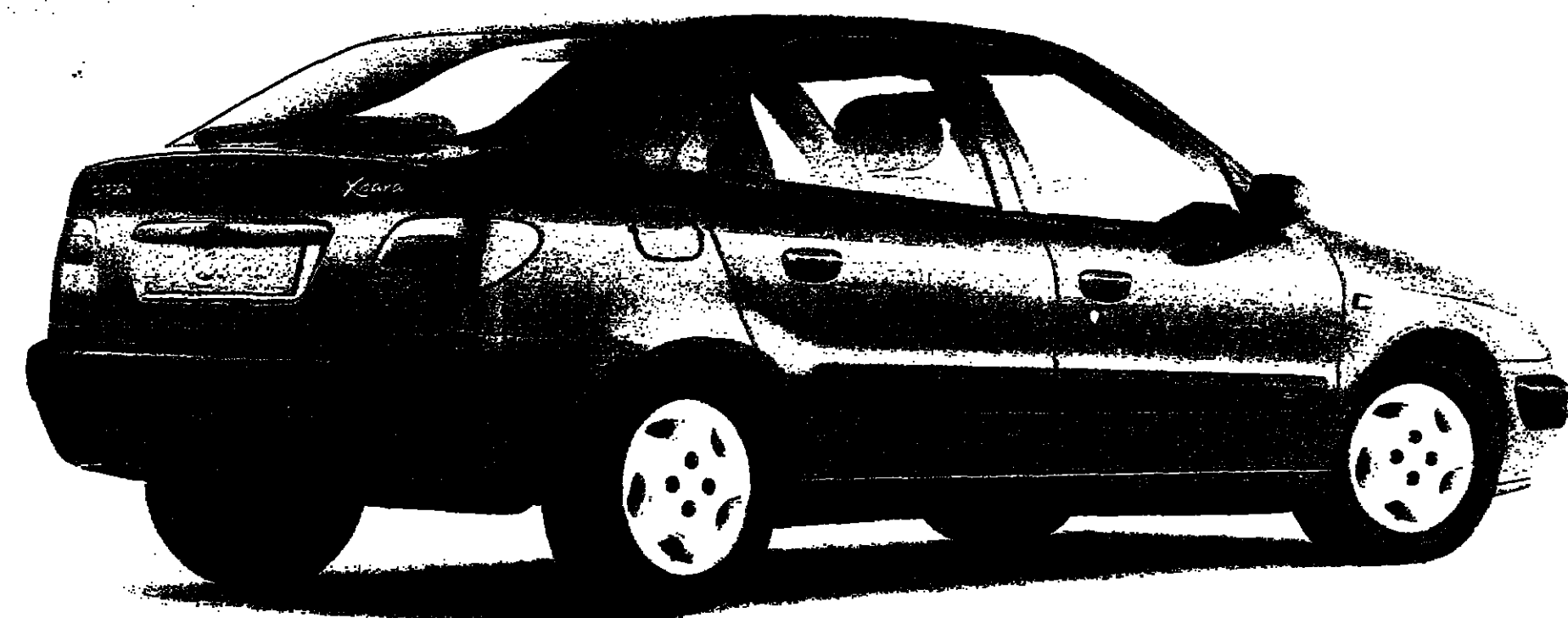
BY GARY FINN

said he was still "fond of Frank".

However, Mr Warren conceded that he may have to sell the family home to meet the first repayment.

Under the agreement, Mr Warren acknowledged his obligation to pay Mr King in recognition of his rights as a partner and publicly withdrew all the allegations which he had made against him and his company, Don King Promotions.

Outside court, Mr King commented: "My reputation is most important to me and the vindication of my rights both here and in America. The justice system here has given me justice and I am very, very happy."



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Hague fails to draw blood in clash over health service

THE PAST three weeks of Labour in-fighting and turmoil should have been the perfect backdrop for a nuclear attack by William Hague against the Prime Minister. But, like many an over-hyped advance billing, the expected grudge match failed to materialise.

The pre-planned soundbites drafted by Mr Hague may have looked good on paper but they failed to deliver the knock-out blow Tories were hoping for. Mr Hague had prepared too much. Both sides fielded a full turn-out and a tanned but tense Prime Minister waited anxiously for Mr Hague's opening salvo. First, though, Mr Blair had

to endure the nightmare of Jim Dobbin (Lab, Heywood & Middleton) droning on about the sense of occasion he felt at "asking the first question in the last year of this millennium - I feel very important". He could not see Mr Blair looking irritated and impatient as he bored on, telling the Prime Minister how marvellous the New Deal and the latest unemployment figures were.

A momentarily hushed House then waited for Mr Hague, who wondered if Mr Blair regretted Frank Dobson's comments in autumn that the NHS could face the possibility of the winter with confidence. The question fell flat and Mr

Blair looked relieved and relaxed at the mere mention of the word "health". Adopting the tactic of Margaret Thatcher, he splattered endless statistics around the Chamber in an enthusiastic, confident, manner.

It took him no time at all to say any current shortcomings were the result of the Tory years of NHS mismanagement. True or not, while this tactic may one day eventually run its course, it still plays well for the moment with Labour MPs. The opportunity was now presented for the Prime Minister to reveal details of his secret, Princess of Wales-style visit to an accident and emergency

THE SKETCH



MICHAEL BROWN

unit the previous evening. At first hand, he said, he was told of the shortage of nurses and lack of investment, which he blamed on the

Tories' record. Mr Hague retorted that Mr Blair always had to blame someone else.

But he then made a misjudgement by weaving the events surrounding the recent scandals and resignations into the same batch of questions. Normally Mr Hague sensibly raises his second issue later on during question time but yesterday he fired all his ammunition at once in a scatter-gun approach. While the tactic was not a total disaster, neither was it a roaring success, and enabled Mr Blair to riposte with: "It didn't take him long to get off the health service."

The Tory leader continued firing indiscriminately at the Peter Mandelson and Geoffrey Robinson targets but Mr Blair ducked and dived as the bullets merely grazed him without drawing any blood.

Mr Hague's best line was when he denounced suggestions of Mr Mandelson's early return to government. "The comeback kid is the kick-back kid." This got his troops cheering politely but they looked mildly disappointed. Nick Hawkins (C, Surrey Heath) raised the holiday absence of the Blair children from school after term had started but he was shot down in flames by the Speaker. "We don't allow our families to be used as bat-

tering-rams." It was left to the Liberal Democrat leader, Paddy Ashdown, to put the boot into Labour's alleged failure to deliver their promises on crime, health and education. Unusually, he went for the shrieking voice that belied the lovey-dovey relationship they are supposed to enjoy. It may have been overdone to keep in check disgruntled Liberal Democrats who do not like talk of pacts with Labour. Whatever Mr Ashdown's motives, Dennis Skinner (Lab, Bolsover) shouted to Mr Blair: "Sack him," which got the best laugh of an otherwise scrappy and scruffy session.

Labour woes 'made NHS crisis worse'

PM'S QUESTION TIME
BY SARAH SCHAEFER
Political Reporter

WILLIAM HAGUE claimed yesterday the past weeks of turmoil within the Government had been a "disgrace" that had directly affected the crisis in the NHS.

The Tory leader used the first Prime Minister's question time of the year to attack the "personal feuds" that erupted over the Christmas recess.

He told the House of Commons: "While the NHS has been in crisis, personal feuds have taken the place of political principle, personal loaths have taken the place of political priorities."

But Tony Blair insisted that while there were "still huge problems in the health service" it was impossible to "put right 20 years of neglect in schools and health in 20 months."

However, Mr Hague went on to accuse the Prime Minister of having tried to protect Peter Mandelson, the former secretary of state for trade and industry, and now wanting to rehabilitate him even though the past few weeks had "been a disgrace".

"It is time you buried the spin-doctoring politics of New Labour with the self-serving, high-living career of the politician who invented it...you are treating him like the Come-



William Hague: Attacking Labour yesterday

back Kid when he is actually the Kickback Kid.

"No matter how often you re-launch it, a Government that believes in everything and believes in nothing cannot succeed."

The rowdy exchanges followed three weeks of upheavals and turmoil for the Government, overshadowed by the resignations of Mr Mandelson, Geoffrey Robinson as Paymaster-General and the Chancellor of the Exchequer's press secretary, Charlie Whelan.

Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, told Mr Blair: "Electors did not vote to kick out the Tories and see public services worsen."

But the Prime Minister said the extra £2.5bn investment in the NHS had ensured that it was getting through the winter

in much better shape than would have been the case.

Mr Hague said: "What we have seen in the last few weeks is intensive care bed availability at the lowest ever, we've seen doctors and nurses under even more pressure than before."

"We've seen pregnant women told not to give birth, we've seen refrigerated lorries used as temporary morgues, we've seen people on trolleys in hospitals - all people who were told they could look forward to the winter with confidence."

To Labour jeers, Mr Hague added: "To you there is always someone else to blame. The NHS is in crisis and you say the Government is innocent. Whatever happens in this Government, everybody always says they are innocent."

"The Trade and Industry Secretary resigns and he's innocent. The Paymaster-General resigns, and now we know why he was called the Paymaster-General, and he's meant to be innocent. The Chancellor's press secretary resigns, or intends to resign, and he's innocent. The NHS is in crisis and you're innocent - St Tony, the Angel of Islington, is always innocent!"

But Mr Blair said there was a shortage of nurses because the Tories cut by 4,000 the number of places between 1992 and 1994 and there were 2,500 more trainee nurses today than at the last general election.



Adele Starr, 12, giving Alan Howarth, the Culture, Media and Sport minister, a lesson on a new computer system that has been installed at Chesterfield library. Users of Derbyshire's 30 largest libraries can now surf the Internet, and use CD-Rom and video links. *Andrew Fox*

Tories accuse ministers of going soft on housing fraud

MINISTERS WERE accused last night of "outrageous" laxity toward benefit crime after it emerged that newly introduced government guidelines had led to a sharp fall in fraud detection across the country.

Housing benefit fraud investigators have estimated that they will lose up to £200m a year because of a little-known circular issued by the Department of Social Security.

Town halls are reporting a 60 per cent drop in the level of fraud detection as a result of the new DSS rules that tightened the rules of evidence. Until last year, a "balance of probabilities" system operated and investi-

SOCIAL SECURITY
BY PAUL WAUGH
Political Correspondent

gators could suspend benefit on suspicion of illegality and provide concrete proof later.

The DSS circular informed councils that they would no longer be compensated for money lost to fraudsters unless they provided surveillance and other evidence to prove that the fraud was deliberate.

Councils claim that the Government has "changed the goalposts" in a bid to save itself millions of pounds while claiming that fraud was dropping. Anti-fraud units across the UK

claim the new system penalises them and could result in job losses or rises in council tax.

Senior Tories are set to raise the issue in the Commons today, when they will claim the circular proves that ministerial rhetoric on tackling fraud is not matched by reality. Iain Duncan Smith, the Conservative social security spokesman, said that the DSS change was an "outrageous" example of the Government watering down the campaign against fraud.

"We always worried that Labour was soft on benefit crime and this proves it. This circular is a politically motivated sleight of hand to save the

department millions," he said.

Mr Duncan Smith claimed that the Social Security minister Angela Eagle had misled the House of Commons on Monday when she denied that anti-fraud strategies had been watered down.

Alistair Darling, the Secretary of State for Social Security, denied the Tory charges last night. "Since I arrived at the DSS, I have ended the 'money for nothing' culture. The new system of housing benefit fraud targets produces real fraud savings not fictional ones. In the next few weeks I shall be making a major announcement on my anti-fraud strategy."

A spokeswoman for the DSS said that the changes had been introduced after claims that some councils had been over-claiming the level of fraud in their area. £100m was being directed into improving fraud prevention for local authorities. The total amount of money saved by local authority fraud investigation units in 1997-98 was £342m, with the majority of town halls saving nearly £2m each on average.

The National Audit Office reported this week that there was "no evidence of any improvement" in stemming the losses from benefit fraud suffered by councils.

Care system 'confused'

THE PROVISION of care to patients with both health and social needs is confused, inadequate and riven with inconsistencies, a committee of MPs reported yesterday.

The Commons Select Committee on Health condemned the present system under which the NHS provides health care while local councils look after social services. "Responsibilities are blurred, professionals face unnecessary problems and users and carers

SOCIAL SERVICES
BY JEREMY LAURANCE
Health Editor

are suffering because of barriers created by structural division which is based on an ill-defined and arguably non-existent boundary," the MPs said.

The committee found evidence that people coming out of hospital faced a "constant battle" to find out what social service care was available. One stroke victim received no help

at home for six months after leaving hospital - because she did not know who to ask. Terminal cancer victims who left hospitals to die sometimes had to wait almost a month before their needs were assessed.

Radical reform was needed, the MPs said, adding: "We consider that the problems of collaboration between health and social services will not be properly resolved until there is an integrated health and social care system."

THE HOUSE



Protection Bill

A BILL to improve the protection of children from physical and sexual abuse by introducing a list of people unsuitable to work with them was given a formal first reading yesterday. It was introduced by Debra Shipley, Labour MP for Stourbridge.

Post Office bid

THE PRICE paid by the Post Office for German Parcel was its annual turnover plus any special assets, Ian McCartney, the Trade and Industry minister said. Previously, acquisition estimates were not given as they were commercially sensitive.

No pardons

THE GOVERNMENT resisted calls for pardons for 343 British servicemen shot for desertion in the First World War as little evidence survived.

Spinning 'won't stop'

THE PROBLEM of spin-doctoring will "never completely go away", Jack Cunningham, the Minister for the Cabinet Office, said yesterday amid growing concern about the influence of press aides such as Alastair Campbell.

Speaking during a Liberal Democrat-led Opposition debate on government information, Dr Cunningham said that the record briefings were an enduring fact of political life.

"Much is made out of anonymous comments and quotes... The very fact that they are anonymous makes it very difficult for anyone, however great the will, to do anything about them at all."

Dr Cunningham, in charge of

INFORMATION DEBATE
BY SARAH SCHAEFER

co-ordinating the presentation of government policy, said Liberal Democrats took part in the process too. "We all know when we read in the newspapers, don't we, quotes which say 'friends of Mr Ashdown', we know what that is - that's Mr Ashdown, that's Mr Ashdown's office. We all know the code and we read that quite frequently."

Some political journalists, however, were "absolutely addicted" to spin-doctoring, he added, stressing: "The reality is that it's never going to completely go away, but there is absolutely no evidence of any

abuse of power by Mr Campbell."

Alan Beith, the Liberal Democrats deputy leader, demanded to be told the duties of Chancellor Gordon Brown's press secretary, Charlie Whelan, now he was to resign.

"Does he sit at his desk reading through the job adverts and sending out his CV or is he actually engaged in government work? Will he be restricted in the private sector posts that he can take up, because of access to government information that he has had and is he continuing to have that kind of access?"

"I think we are entitled to know that. Other senior Treasury civil servants would be restricted if they moved out to the private sector."

Peers' leader promises war

GOVERNMENT HOPES of a speedy abolition of hereditary peers were dashed when Tories promised to continue a campaign of "trench warfare" against the plans.

Lord Strathclyde, the Tory leader in the Lords, said that some backbench peers were likely to draft wrecking amendments in a final protest at the changes. "Sunset clauses" would ensure the Bill will self-

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM
BY PAUL WAUGH

destruct if the Government fails to carry out wholesale reform before the next election, he said yesterday.

The Government will bring forward a Bill abolishing the voting and sitting rights of hereditary peers next week, with the White Paper establishing a Royal Commission to

decide on the long-term shape of the second chamber. Ministers had hoped for Tory support for a crossbench compromise to allow 75 hereditary peers to remain in a transitional chamber, but Lord Strathclyde made clear no deals were likely. "There will be trench warfare. Any question that this Bill is going to fly through the House of Lords without hardly a wave is absurd," he said.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Praise for vote on Euro fraud

THE EUROPEAN Parliament's planned vote of no confidence in the European Commission is a reflection of a "much tougher attitude and a much greater awareness" of the fraud problem, the Agriculture minister Lord Donoughue said.

Today's business

Commons: Questions to Education and Employment ministers. Debate on Public Accounts Committee reports. Fisheries debate. Lords: Social Security (Transfer of Functions) Bill, committee. Financing of Maintained Schools Regulations. Industrial Training Levy (Engineering Construction Board) Order. Industrial Training Levy (Construction Board) Order.

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Private medicine ruins life - could care less

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'Private medicine ruined my life - and couldn't care less'

A PRIVATE patient who has been permanently maimed after the disgraced gynaecologist Rodney Ledward operated on her seven times has had her attempts to obtain help blocked because of the lack of regulation of the private sector.

Anita Hill's experience at the hands of Mr Ledward, who was struck off the medical register last September, fell so far short of acceptable standards that the NHS consultant she went to see recommended she sue for negligence. However, her attempts to elicit a response from Mr Ledward's legal advisers and medical insurers have so far failed.

Mrs Hill, 54, who spent seven years in and out of hospital and at one stage suffered a perforated bowel, was initially refused help by St Saviour's hospital in Hythe, Kent, despite a request from an NHS consultant who said she needed further surgery. St Saviour's is run by the British United Provident Association, Bupa.

The South East Kent community health council accused Bupa of "dragging its heels" over the issue and lawyers for the victims said its refusal to accept a share of the responsibility was "reprehensible".

Later Bupa relented, after being contacted by *The Inde-*

BY JEREMY LAURANCE
Health Editor

pendent, and agreed to offer Mrs Hill a free consultation that is due to take place today. The company also agreed to donate £2,000 to the patient support group set up by the community health council for victims of Mr Ledward.

The lack of regulation of the private health industry is to be investigated by the House of Commons health select committee, starting next month.

Mrs Hill, whose ordeal began 12 years ago, believed she had simply been unlucky until the full extent of Mr Ledward's incompetence emerged in November. More than 400 women have contacted the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford, Kent, since he was struck off the medical register in September and over 120 are considering legal action. About half the women, including Mrs Hill, were private patients.

She said: "If it wasn't for the NHS I wouldn't have anyone to help me. They have told me who to turn to and what to do. The private sector have not been to any of our meetings. The message is, 'If you have still got health insurance we can see you but if not, tough'."

She added: "I thought there

would be someone in the private sector to go to if you had problems but I learnt to my cost that there wasn't. My whole life has been ruined and I have had nobody to turn to."

Patricia Fearnley, Mrs Hill's solicitor from Thomson, Snell and Passmore in Tunbridge Wells, which is handling most of the negligence cases, said: "It comes as a surprise to private patients that there is no one to complain to, because they think they are paying for the best in medical care."

A spokeswoman for Bupa said the firm had endeavoured to help Mr Ledward's patients by offering free consultations. She added: "Patients are stuck in a private trap and we don't like the situation. We don't employ consultants as the NHS does and they are not answerable to us. We appreciate it is difficult for the patients but it is difficult for us to help because their complaint is with the consultant, not the hospital."



Anita Hill, who is still suffering from the effects of seven operations by the gynaecologist Rodney Ledward

Mark Chilvers

DIARY OF A MEDICAL DISASTER

Operation one: Anita Hill's ordeal began in 1987 when she was referred to Rodney Ledward on her husband's private health insurance for treatment for heavy menstrual bleeding and stress incontinence. He told her that a hysterectomy was the answer.

Operation two: Three months later she was back in St Saviour's hospital complaining of pain in her side. Mr Ledward discovered an ovarian cyst that had been missed when he carried out the hysterectomy. She had an operation to remove it but the wound wouldn't heal. **Operations three and four:** She was taken back twice to repair a hernia that



Ledward: Struck off

had developed and correct a prolapsed bladder. The operations by Mr Ledward failed and she was referred to the NHS where the hernia repair was carried out successfully.

Operation five: Mr Ledward told her she would need hormone replacement therapy and advised her to have hormonal implants, which were replaced every three months.

Operation six: In 1993, pains developed in her right side and she was operated on by Mr Ledward to remove her remaining ovary. She felt nauseous and feverish when she came round from the anaesthetic, but was discharged - only to be sent back by her GP 24 hours later.

Operation seven: After she developed a swollen abdomen, Mr Ledward inserted a vaginal drain and said he would have to operate again. The drain

apparently ruptured her bowel and another surgeon was called in and performed an emergency colostomy.

Over the next seven months Mrs Hill underwent two further operations on the remainder of her bowel. The series of operations has left her with a weakened stomach wall and a mis-shaped abdomen. She suffers pain, is prone to vomiting and has been told she needs a further hernia repair and plastic surgery on her stomach to remove scar tissue. Her husband has lost his private health insurance and she took early retirement on grounds of ill health in 1991.

Candid major told to resign

BY STEPHEN GOODWIN
Scotland Correspondent

MAJOR ERIC JOYCE, who publicly condemned the Army leadership as a clique of white, out-of-touch elitists, has been ordered to resign his commission or be sacked.

The outspoken Black Watch major hopes to stand as a Labour candidate in elections for the Scottish Parliament and critics privately regard his attack on the "officer class" as an exercise in self-promotion.

Major Joyce was told at a meeting with his commanding officer in Aldershot that he would automatically be discharged if he did not resign his commission within two months. Unbowed, he reiterated afterwards he intends to take his case for freedom of speech within the Army to the European Court of Human Rights.

Major Joyce breached Queen's Regulations by writing a pamphlet for the Labour-affiliated Fabian Society and has appeared before the Army Board, accused of speaking about the Army without its permission. In the pamphlet he alleged the Army was racist, snobbish and outdated.

Major Joyce rose through the ranks in the Black Watch and is on the staff of the Adjutant General's Corps, the Army's administrative branch. He said yesterday it was "terribly important" soldiers should be allowed to speak freely and he condemned the "obsession" of the Army top brass with an "officer class". He said Queen's Regulations were "a convention" and not legally enforceable.

Major Joyce is being dealt with under a procedure allowing unsuitable personnel to leave the Army.

The Ministry of Defence said attitudes in the Army were evolving. "We are a meritocracy. If you are not good enough, you don't get on. We're not interested in a person's background, class or school."

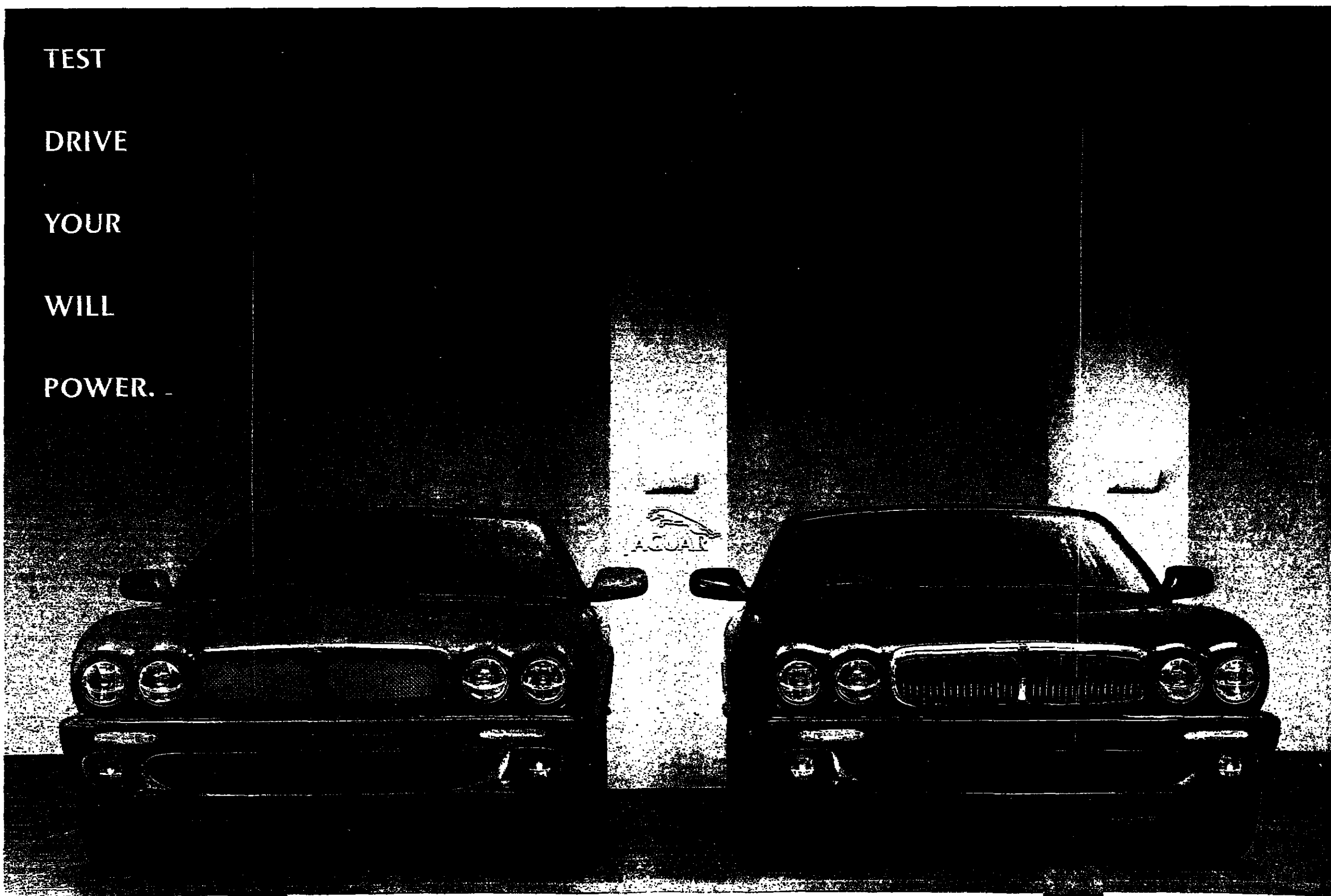
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Rise of healthy but troubled generation



Life was hard for these Glaswegian children in 1948, but modern children, although less likely to succumb to disease, face new problems



Bert Hardy/Bob Watkins

THE LIVES of children entering the new millennium have been transformed by 50 years of medical breakthroughs. But the improvements have been tempered by the persistence of the poverty trap and growth in juvenile crime, according to a new report.

Diarrhoea, bronchitis and tuberculosis are no longer the killers they were in 1949. Instead suicide is among the top 10 causes of death for young

BY LOUISE JURY

people today. And although housing has improved since the days when only half the country had piped water, a cooker and a fixed bath, 70,000 children faced homelessness last year.

The snapshot survey of them and now has been drawn from official statistics by the Variety Club of Great Britain, which is marking half a century of

raising money to help children. Jan Walsh, the report's author, said: "In 50 years, Britain has seen vast changes. After the Second World War children had to live in a country still devastated by the conflict. Life was tough but straightforward when compared with the life children face today."

Breakthroughs in medicine have cut the child death statistics to hundreds rather than thousands. The expansion of

universities and cuts in classroom sizes have improved education. But the divorce rate is four times higher than it was 50 years ago and children of lone parents are among the most impoverished.

Fifty years ago, a baby boom was under way among couples who had put their lives on hold during the war years, the report notes. Despite an 18 per cent increase in the population since then, there were nearly as

many young people as there are today - more than 14 million.

The death rate was similar to today's with just over 1 per cent of the total population dying each year. "But children were far more likely to succumb to fatal diseases in 1949 than they are now," Ms Walsh said. Better nutrition, improved living conditions and the NHS immunisation programmes have helped to cut the figures. The report suggests that be-

cause death by disease is less likely, parents' fears that their child may be murdered have increased. Although homicide rates were slightly higher in 1949, the relative importance has risen. "When compared to the other dangers that exist for children in the late 1990s, the possibility that they might be murdered is stronger in comparison to other possible causes of death - because death by disease is now so unlikely."

When teenagers started work in 1949, they were paid relatively low wages. On average, a man aged under 21 earned 58 shillings and sixpence (£2.92) a week which, taking account of inflation, would be an annual wage of £2,872 today. Girls under 18 earned the equivalent of £2,460. The report said: "Even the lowest paid just-out-of-school workers today would get at least £5,000 a year."

But alongside the good news comes bad. Although fewer young people are found guilty of burglary, boys and girls are now committing significant numbers of violent crimes.

Some subjects are impossible to compare. Child abuse was barely recognised half a century ago.

Professor Sir Eric Stroud, whose childcare work at King's Hospital, Lewisham, south London, was supported by £2m of Variety Club money, said there was no doubt the health of children was better than it had been 50 years ago.

Philip Burley, head of the Variety Club, said many medical and health problems may have been solved, though other social and political problems remained. "They are much harder to solve and are really the challenge for the future."

Payout for sex victim of Masons

THE FREEMASONS have agreed to review the way they treat female employees after a woman clerk accepted an undisclosed sum in settlement of a claim of sexual harassment by a senior Mason.

The out-of-court settlement saved the Masons from a potentially embarrassing two-day industrial tribunal, due to begin yesterday, which would have shone an unwanted spotlight on the inner workings of the United Grand Lodge, the headquarters of English and Welsh Freemasonry.

Sheila Delaney reached a settlement with lawyers representing the lodge after claiming that she was subjected to a four-year campaign of sexual intimidation.

Ms Delaney had alleged that while she worked at the building in Great Queen Street, central London, comments were made about her nipples and breasts and she was subjected to unwanted physical contact by a senior colleague. Since Ms Delaney's complaints, the lodge has employed a human resources consultant to review its employment practices.

While not admitting liability, the lodge released a joint statement with McDonagh and Associates, the London solicitors representing Ms Delaney, saying: "The United Grand Lodge of England very much regrets the circumstances which have led to Ms Delaney's complaints and has determined to ensure that such a situation does not recur."

Mr Daniel said after the settlement: "There was an investigation. I had a panel and I had independent people on that panel with expert advice and they upheld some of the allegations. The complainant was not happy with some of the remedies put forward by the panel but has now agreed to settle and the matter is now closed."

In support of her case, Ms Delaney was due to call as a witness a second female employee, Donna Hanson, who reached an out-of-court settlement with the Masons after bringing her own action for sexual discrimination.

Freemasonry, which is known to members as "The Craft", has gone to great lengths in recent years to dispel its reputation for secrecy. It maintains that it is simply a private organisation, no more secret than any other that chooses not to disclose details of its membership.

The United Grand Lodge, which traces its origins back to 1717, oversees the administration of more than 7,800 lodges in England and Wales, with a collective membership of some 350,000.

BY IAN BURRELL
Home Affairs Correspondent

Mason being called before a disciplinary hearing last September.

The Mason admitted some of the charges against him and was found guilty of gross misconduct. But the Masons' grand secretary, Jim Daniel, decided the offences did not warrant dismissal and, despite the protests of Ms Delaney, allowed him to return to his previous post the same month.

Ms Delaney told *The Independent* she could not sleep the night before the senior Mason returned to work. "I felt as if I had to go in and show willing but I could not cope. I left at one o'clock and cried all the way home. People on the Tube thought I was mentally ill," she said.

On the advice of a doctor she took sick leave and has not been back to work for four months. She alleged that her treatment caused her to lose ten pounds in weight as she suffered humiliation, demoralisation and lack of confidence.

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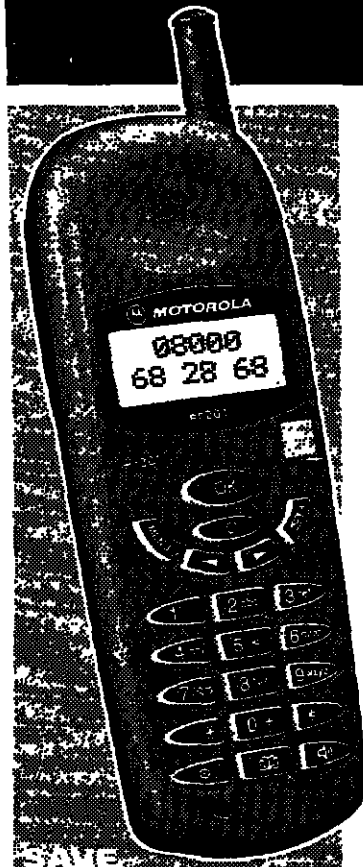
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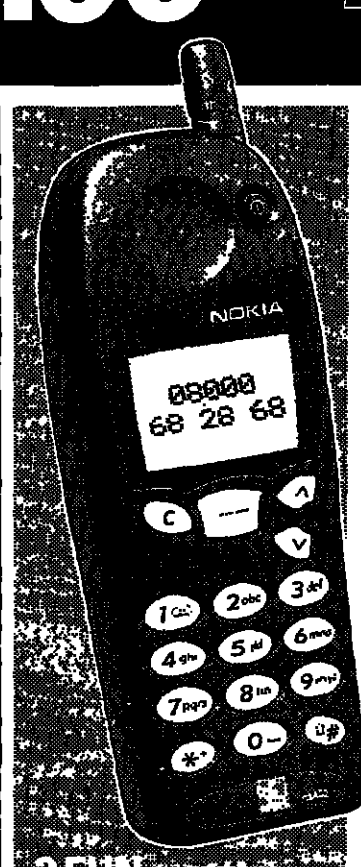
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MEPs back away from 'nuclear option'

BY STEPHEN CASTLE
AND KATHERINE BUTLER
in Strasbourg

A BLOODIED European Commission looks set to cling on to power today after a dramatic eleventh hour threat to quit by its President Jacques Santer paid off by calling the bluff of the European Parliament.

MEPs were last night poised to draw back from a threat to vote the Commission out of office after a day of turmoil in which Mr Santer warned he would resign if they voted to sack Edith Cresson, the former French Socialist Prime Minister. The Brussels executive could still find itself out of power in the unlikely event of a majority calling for the resignation of the scandal-tainted Mrs Cresson in a vote today.

Sacking the Commission body would be an unprecedented act which would plunge the European Union into crisis. It would halt key reforms to the common agricultural policy and the 660bn annual budget needed to prepare the Union for enlargement.

Strasbourg was engulfed by intrigue yesterday as the Commission's future hung in the balance. A desperate scramble was underway in the parliament's committee rooms while Commission supporters - mostly Socialist MEPs - sought to fight off a motion of censure, the so-called "nuclear option" which would vote the Commission out of office, and another motion singling out individual Commissioners for blame.

Mr Santer moved to ensure his own survival in the small hours of yesterday morning when he issued a challenge to the biggest grouping, the 202 MEPs of the centre-right Christian Democrat group. The tactic prompted up to 80 conservatives to pull back from the brink when he made it clear that a resolution targeting Mrs Cresson, the Commissioner for education, would prompt him to resign, probably bringing the entire Commission body with him.

The Christian Democrats backed off and instead of "naming and shaming" Mrs Cresson and Manuel Marin, a Spanish Vice-President of the Commission, were planning a resolution severely criticising EU financial mismanagement.



Jacques Santer, President of the European Commission, with Edith Cresson, the French Commissioner, at the beginning of a meeting of the 20-strong team of Commissioners in Strasbourg yesterday.

All week MEPs had been talking up the "nuclear option" of sacking the full Commission body over a burgeoning fraud and nepotism scandal which dates from 1995.

Over dinner in the European Parliament's plush riverside restaurant late on Tuesday evening, about 20 centre-right Euro MPs had gathered in the cavernous red-carpeted room. They were questioning Mr Santer about the crisis when he dropped the bombshell by threatening to plunge the EU into a constitutional crisis by resigning himself if MEPs tried to censure any members of his team.

A row over the EU 1996 budget was suddenly spinning out of control and threatening meltdown - much as Monica Lewinsky's allegations against

President Bill Clinton came seemingly from nowhere to threaten his presidency.

Yesterday, in a nondescript meeting room beside the Parliament's hemicycle, Tory MEPs met with Sir Leon Brittan, another Vice-President of the European Commission, seeking to avert a showdown. But when Sir Leon sought to mollify the MEPs by offering a new committee to investigate the fraud allegations, one MEP responded: "What's the point of a group of wise men when we want blood?"

Most of the details of fraud and irregularities date back several years, but two sitting Commissioners have been singled out for attack.

Mrs Cresson has come in for acute criticism over alleged poor administration of a youth

training programme and for "favouritism" in awarding of contracts.

Mr Marin faces questions about the administration of the multi-billion pound humanitarian aid budget, "Echo", which he controlled until 1995, and the "Med" programme, designed to help Mediterranean countries.

When, in December, the Parliament's budget control committee refused to sign off a set of accounts relating to 1996, the Socialists proposed today's censure motion, which was intended to fail, as a means of giving the Commission a vote of confidence.

That initiative, made by Pauline Green, leader of the Socialists (the largest group in the Parliament), backfired badly. With a two-thirds ma-

jority needed to expel the Commission, adoption of the censure motion seemed impossible. But last week Commission bureaucrats in Brussels enraged MEPs by suspending a whistle-blowing official, Paul van Buitenen.

The ensuing row provoked the power struggle between the Parliament and the unelected college of 20 Commissioners.

As a welter of further revelations rocked the Commission, the Socialist position proved more and more difficult to sustain. Not only had Mr Van Buitenen's predicament raised the temperature, but also Mrs Cresson showed no signs of bowing to a growing clamour for her departure.

With her MEPs concerned that they were appearing to be

soft on fraud, Mrs Green changed course and demanded concessions from the Commission. At the same time, she called for Mr Santer to quit if any within his college were singled out.

There seems little doubt that Mr Santer was a co-conspirator in this move to raise the stakes, because there is ample evidence of dialogue between the two. A late-night meeting on Tuesday in the Hilton Hotel was captured on film by a German TV crew.

MEPs' anger at Mrs Cresson remains undiminished. Last week she held two dinners for journalists in her elegant Brussels apartment, in which she railed against her accusers. The German media was shearing, chiefly to blame for creating a furore to fuel the new

DIARY OF A SHOWDOWN

1995: Fraud in the EU is highlighted by a Tory MEP, Edward McMillan Scott (right). Two officials face criminal charges for allegedly defrauding European Year of Tourism of up to £3m. The case continues.

November 1995: European Court of Auditors refuses to certify EU's annual accounts after discovering that almost £3bn not properly accounted for.

Late 1996: European Parliament, concerned by the Commission's slow response on tourism fraud, threatens to freeze 10 per cent of Commissioners' salaries. Commission sets up taskforce.

November 1996: Court of Auditors once more refuses to certify EU's accounts amid signs of lax controls over around £2.5bn.

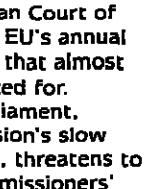
Early 1997: Finnish Commissioner Erkki Liikanen (above) announces plan to root out nepotism in Commission and improve financial controls.

March 1998: Parliament holds up EU budget again, pending promised concessions from Commission.

October 1998: Allegations in French press about cronyism in education and training department of French Socialist Commissioner Edith Cresson (right). She threatens lawsuits. More allegations about loss of £1.7m in



humanitarian aid money because of irregularities going back to early 1980s when the Spanish Commissioner, Manuel Marin, was in charge of programme. October 1998: Santer promises independent fraud office to replace Uclaf, Commission's fraud unit, in bid to fend off German MEPs' threats to table motion of censure.



December 1998: Parliament refuses to discharge budget after Commission issues a "back us or sack us" threat. Pauline Green (right), leader of the Socialist group, tables a censure motion she knows will fail - in effect a tactic to bring about a vote of confidence in the European Commission.



January 1998: News of suspension of Commission whistleblower Paul van Buitenen (below right) reaches Parliament. He has already sent a 34-page dossier of allegations to Green group in Parliament. Support for sacking the entire Commission builds dramatically among angry MEPs across political spectrum.



His \$300,000 job suddenly at risk. Jacques Santer promises "zero tolerance" in an eight-point clean-up plan, including unfettered access to documents by a select committee of Parliament and an end to nepotism in appointments.



Santer, a burgomeister airbrushed into history

BY RUPERT CORNWELL

FOUR YEARS ago, when he succeeded Jacques Delors, *The Independent* wrote that Jacques Santer, the unknown, largely unremarkable prime minister of Luxembourg, had been "airbrushed into history" when he was chosen to head the European Commission. Yesterday, he came within a whisker of being airbrushed out of it.

The man who occupies the most important job in the European Union was nearly removed from it. And apart from a face suddenly removed from the ceremonial photographs, scarcely a soul would have noticed.

Jacques Santer has left no enduring mark on the governance of Europe. True, he has been present at great events - the Treaty of Amsterdam, the start of enlargement to the east, above all the launch of the single currency - but more as Rosenbergs or Guldens than as Hamlet. No "plan Santer", no "Santer initiative", will trouble future students of the new Europe. He will be remembered only as the first Commission president to be pushed to the brink of resignation by the European Parliament.

Even the sins of fraud and nepotism for which his Commission is being held to account are not his own. The worst Mr Santer can be accused of is not running a tight ship. In reality, his threatened departure was a measure of the imperfections of the European constitution, which gives the Strasbourg parliament the stark choice of sacking either the entire Commission or none of it. For a man thrust into a job he did not seek, it would have been a slightly unfair end.

Mr Santer was a lawyer and civil servant before entering politics and becoming an MEP party leader and eventually prime minister in 1989. However the image that most lingers is that of a spokesman of the city of Luxembourg, a post he held for three years in the late 1970s. Silver-haired, ruddy-



The EC building in Brussels yesterday, where the fraud scandal is preoccupying the media.

cheeked and with a suitable touch of embonpoint, he is the burgomeister made flesh. Affordable and easy going, Mr Santer is a firm believer that a lot of life's problems cannot be solved over a decent lunch.

After the intense and visionary Jacques who preceded him, this Jacques was probably what Europe wanted: an anti-Delors, a man from a small country who depended on his patrons (first and foremost Chancellor Helmut Kohl), someone who would not rock the boat. And until this week, he has not.

To give Mr Santer his due, in a quiet fashion - and contrary to appearances created by the current kerfuffle - he has begun to reform the Brussels bureaucracy, a matter his predecessor would not stoop to attend to. His problem is that, unlike his predecessor, he is not feared by those around him. Now that Mr Delors has gone, old baronies are reappearing.

The commissioners who count are those such as Leon Brittan, Mario Monti, Karel Van Miert, even that indefatigable headline-grabber, Emma Bonino. Mr Santer is the front-man, long on bonhomie but short on influence.

But if so, that is also a reflection of the times. All the prestige of Mr Delors could not mask the shift of EU power away from Brussels to national capitals, which began in earnest with the negotiation of the Maastricht treaty. The member states wanted a weak president in Brussels, and they chose one.

Curiously, Mr Santer largely owes his appointment to the British, courtesy of John Major's veto of the favourite to succeed Mr Delors, the then Belgian prime minister, Jean-Luc Dehaene. By a process of elimination, they arrived at Mr Santer, who had the further advantage for the government in

London of being, it was assumed, a less than ardent believer in the F-word.

As not infrequently in matters European, the British got it wrong. To call a Luxemburger a federalist is almost a tautology. How could it be otherwise in a country the size of Oxfordshire, wedged between France, Germany and Belgium, whose history has largely been written by the local Letzeburgesch dialect. Mr Santer speaks French and German, as well as the endearingly accented English of a continental villager from Gilbert and Sullivan. By instinct, a Luxemburger thinks European. The British had secured their low-profile president - but not a president who would slow the EU's self-propelling momentum towards greater integration.

For a while, Mr Santer's sheer blandness seemed as if it might earn him a second five-year term. This crisis has obviously dashed those hopes; but even before the corruption charges engulfed his Commission, the political winds in Europe had moved against him. In 1994 he had the crucial backing of conservative governments in London and Bonn. Today the centre-left rules in Germany and Britain - and almost everywhere else for that matter; the new presidential photo of the centre-left and a large EU country. Centre-right Luxemburgers need not apply.

And so to the present crisis, which has shown Mr Santer at his worst. Even the most genial burgomeister, especially one who is not directly elected to the job, is apt to become a mite arrogant after a while.

In truth, it would be amazing if there was no fraud in a total EU budget of £60bn. What sticks in the craw is the burgomeister's unconvincing feeling that the very suggestion something is amiss in the town hall is an impertinence, an indignity to which his institution should not be subjected. But it has been, and both the EU and Jacques Santer are probably the better for it.

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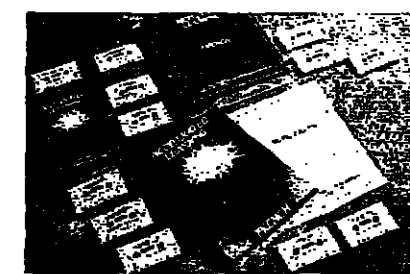
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Release of soldiers lifts Kosovo gloom

FOR THE TIME being, at least, Kosovo has edged itself back from the brink of all-out war, as ethnic Albanian fighters from the Kosovo Liberation Army yesterday freed the eight Yugoslav soldiers they had held for five days.

The men, apparently in good condition, were handed back at the village of Stari Trg, close to where they had been held since being captured last Friday. The release followed intense mediation by members of the international team who monitor the ceasefire. Just a few kilometres away waited dozens of tanks of the Yugoslav army, ready to crush this latest insurgency by force had the mediation efforts failed.

It seemed likely, but was not immediately confirmed, that in return for the release the Yugoslav authorities have agreed to set free at least nine KLA members they were hold-

BY RUPERT CORNWELL

ing prisoner. Although the Serbian side said that the release was "unconditional," William Walker, the head of the monitors, refused to give details of what he termed a "fair and balanced agreement". This implies that the KLA prisoners could be freed later as part of an amnesty, allowing Belgrade to save face and claim victory for the time being.

The peaceful resolution now gives a small - and perhaps final - breathing space for the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe to convert the fragile ceasefire, brokered last October by the US troubleshooter Richard Holbrooke, into a more solid truce, before spring and the advent of the Balkans' traditional combat season.

The omens, however, are not good. All hope of a lasting

Kosovo settlement depends on the start of serious political talks between President Slobodan Milosevic's government in Belgrade and the ethnic Albanians, who account for 90 per cent of the population of the Serbian province.

The one plan currently on the table has been devised by Christopher Hill, the US special envoy to the Balkans. It calls for a restoration of the province's autonomy, but not its independence and puts off for three more years a final decision on Kosovo's status.

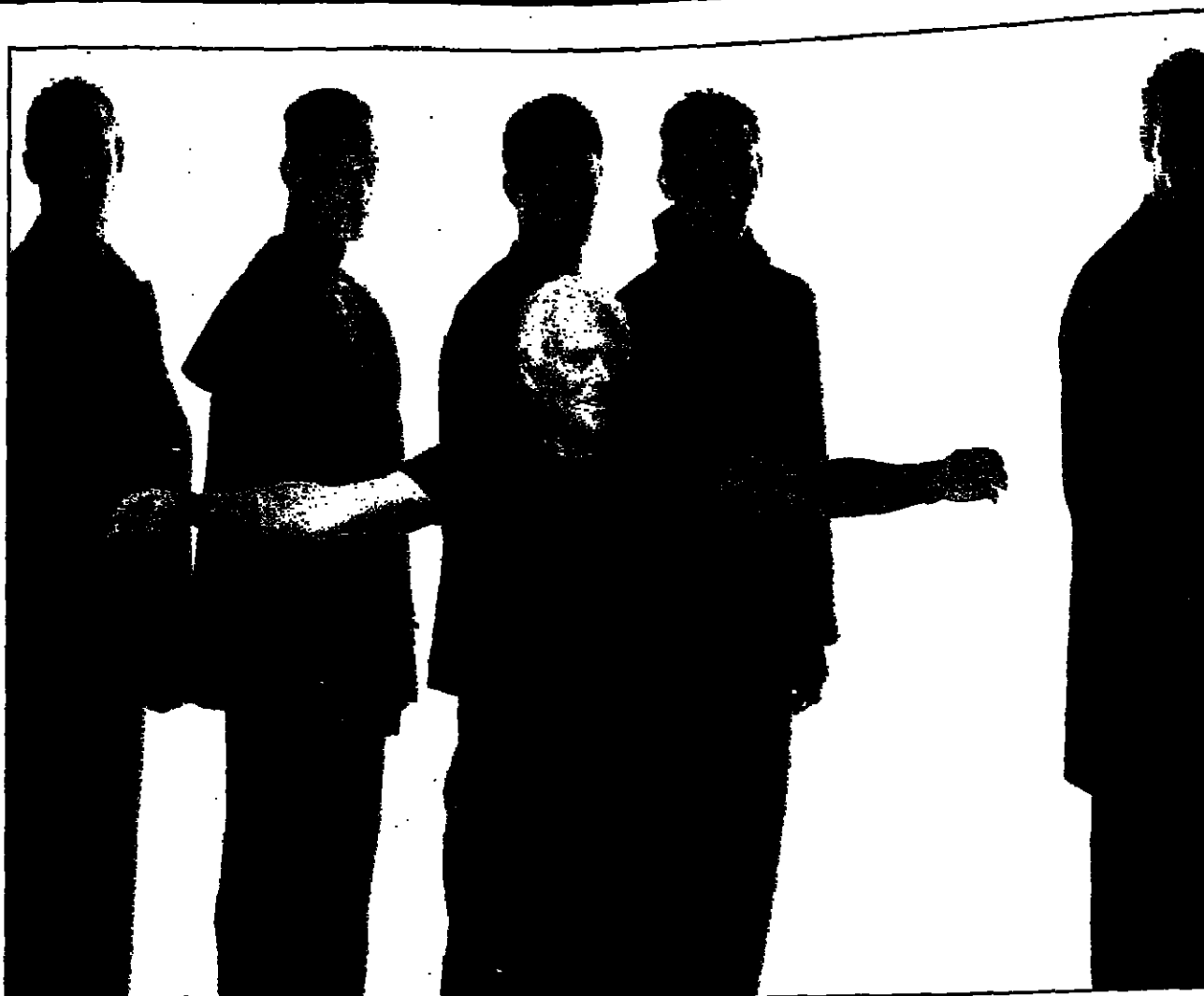
But talks have not begun - and indeed cannot begin until the Albanians sink their internal differences and adopt a common position. If anything, however, the rift seems to be widening between the political leadership under Ibrahim Rugova, which advocates peaceful means to secure independence, and the KLA,

which has been waging a war for 18 months to throw the Yugoslavs out by force.

That rivalry could explain the murder on Monday by unknown assassins of Enver Maloku, the chief of the pro-Rugova Kosovo Information Centre. The KLA insists Mr Maloku, who was shot outside his home in the province's capital, Pristina, was killed by Serbs in revenge for the death of several Serb farmers and policemen in previous days. Others suspect the KLA of being behind the attack.

What is not in doubt is that the KLA has used the recent lull to boost its strength, smuggling anti-tank weapons and other arms across the border from north-western Albania, where it is in virtual control.

This means that should the fighting restart in earnest, the Serbs will no longer have it all their own way.



Giorgio Armani at the end of his Milan show revealing his autumn/winter 1999 to 2000 collection. Luca Bruno

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FIAT

Germany sets 'foreigners' a loyalty test

FOREIGNERS ASPIRING to German citizenship will have to take a language test and swear an oath of loyalty to the constitution. Those are two of the hurdles erected by the government yesterday as it strove to head off a right-wing backlash in the first reform of the racially defined German nationality law since 1913.

As the opposition Christian Democrats geared up for a national petition against the new law, Otto Schily, the Interior Minister, tried to allay fears that the abolition of "blood right" would water down German-ness. "Citizenship is not a one-way street," he said. "The government expects those naturalised to respect our social order and make an effort with the German language."

The wannabe Germans will have to be model citizens. Applicants must have no criminal record, they can be disqualified if they are living off social security, and will also face political vetting. The purpose of that last rule, Mr Schily said, was to

BY IMRE KARACS
in Bonn

ensure that "Islamic fundamentalists, for example, are excluded".

The opposition and some of the media have made much of the threat of alien conflicts spilling into German streets, as witnessed in the past when Kurds clashed with Turks. About half of the 4 million migrants eligible under the new law come from Turkey.

The most important change will see German citizenship automatically bestowed upon third generation "foreigners" born in Germany. These new subjects would be allowed to keep dual nationality for the first time. Adults will be able to apply after eight years of residence, as opposed to the 15 years required at present. Foreigners married to Germans may apply after two years of marriage.

Until now, only those of German ancestry could be certain of a German passport.

Lawyer dies in love triangle

A 34-YEAR-OLD lawyer walked into a fashionable restaurant in the centre of Toulouse on Monday night, ordered a glass of champagne, took one sip and then shot himself.

Just over an hour earlier, another lawyer had been shot three times, and seriously wounded, by someone who had lain in wait for him outside his office, and it did not take police long to establish a link between the two incidents. The wife of the man who committed suicide, Maître Jean-Charles Ruf-

BY JOHN LICHFIELD
in Paris

fié, was also a lawyer who worked for the victim of the earlier attack, Maître Patrick Abgrall, 47. Police believe that Mr Rufié suspected - perhaps wrongly - that his wife was having an affair with Mr Abgrall.

Monique Brocard, head of the Toulouse bar association, commented: "The fact that those involved are lawyers is irrelevant. Personal passions exist beneath lawyers' robes."

MARY KALDOR

War is polarising - there is no space for democratic initiatives

IN THE THURSDAY REVIEW PAGE 4

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Senate trial: As Hillary pays the price of one of his affairs, President Clinton faces the consequences of another

'I trust the right thing will be done'

BY MARY DEJEVSKY
in Washington

WITH HIS impeachment trial only hours away, President Bill Clinton broke his public silence on the matter yesterday to say that he trusted the Senate to do "the right thing" and would continue to concentrate on his job as President.

Demonstrating yet again his famed capacity to "compartmentalise", Mr Clinton told reporters: "The important thing for me is to try to spend as little time thinking about that as possible... I trust the right thing will be done and I think that meanwhile I need to work on the business of the people."

Mr Clinton's agreement to respond to reporters' questions at the start of a White House meeting with trade union leaders was seen as a small concession by the White House after an explosion of correspondents' anger the previous day about the President's general unavailability to the media. The level of access to the President has been sharply curbed since allegations about Monica Lewinsky surfaced one year ago.

Even as Mr Clinton was speaking, the White House lawyers who are spearheading his defence and the 13 "managers" from the House of Representatives who are co-ordinating the "prosecution" were completing final preparations for the trial. Proceedings in what will be only the second presidential impeachment trial, and the first this century, start in earnest at 1pm today, with opening statements from both sides.

The President's lawyers yesterday followed up Monday's delivery of their 13-page defence brief with the dispatch to the Senate of a 130-page summary of their arguments.



Linda Tripp (below): Her tape recordings revealed Bill Clinton's affair



Chief among them is that the charges against the President - perjury before a grand jury in the Monica Lewinsky investigation and obstruction of justice in the (now settled) civil suit brought by Paula Jones - are unjustified. An accompanying argument is that even if the charges were proven, they are not serious enough to warrant removing an elected President.

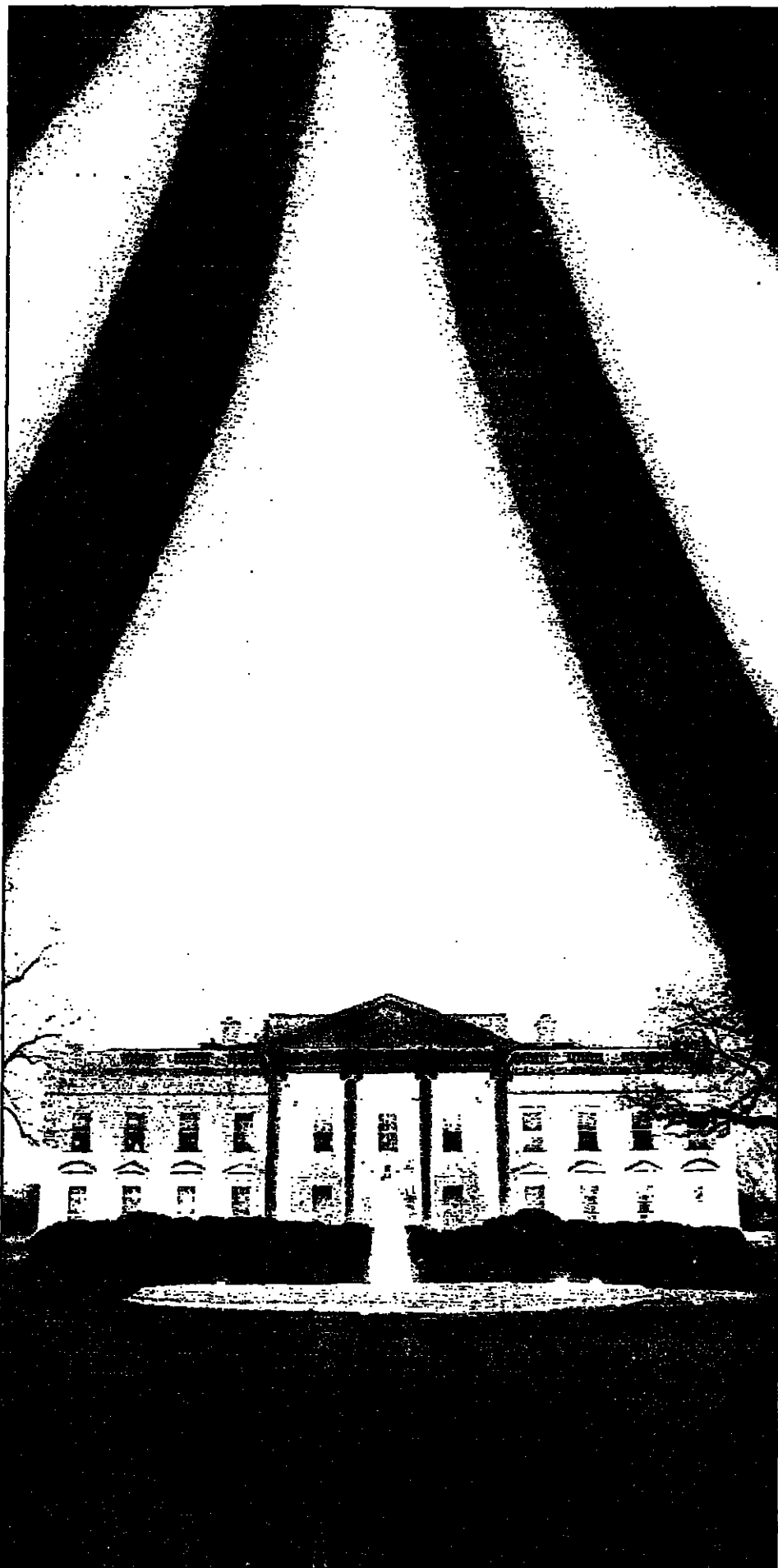
The summary also made the point - one heard repeatedly from Democrats in the House of Representatives during last year's impeachment hearings and subsequent debate - that the proceedings were politically inspired and unfair. And it proceeded to argue a wider point of principle, that convicting the President would irrevocably upset the balance of the US political system.

"Removing the President on these facts," it said, "would substantially alter the delicate constitutional balance, and move us closer to a quasi-parliamentary system, in which the President is elected to office by the choice of the people, but continues in office only at the pleasure of Congress."

The document also said that the White House lawyers would have "an urgent need" to seek additional evidence if the prosecutors tried to introduce material beyond what had already been collected and published in the report by the independent prosecutor, Kenneth Starr, and its accompanying documents.

The White House is adamantly opposed to any extension of the trial to cover other relationships that the President may have had with employees. It also objects to the Senate calling "live" witnesses, insisting that the testimony collected by Mr Starr is sufficient. Many Republican senators, however, say they want to be able to question some of the key players, including Monica Lewinsky herself and the President's private secretary, Betty Currie.

Yesterday marked exactly a year since Mr Starr opened his investigation into the Lewinsky affair, on the basis of recordings supplied to his office by Ms Lewinsky's one-time confidante, Linda Tripp.



The White House, where lawyers are planning the President's defence. Reuters

Mrs Clinton chips in for Jones deal

BY MARY DEJEVSKY

FORMALLY ENDING the chapter that triggered the Monica Lewinsky investigation, President Bill Clinton has paid the \$850,000 (£338,000) settlement that was the price of ending the sexual harassment lawsuit brought by Paula Jones. Contrary to expectations, almost half the money came from the Clintons' own resources, much of it saved by Mrs Clinton; the rest of the money came from an insurance policy.

According to White House sources, the Chubb insurance company, with which Mr Clinton had a policy that included a personal liability clause, agreed to pay out \$475,000. The company had funded a part of his legal expenses in the case and funded the settlement at the cost to Mr Clinton of liquidating the policy.

Many Americans have insurance policies - whether for property, contents, or cars - that include provision for legal costs and personal liability in the event of the policy holder being found liable in a lawsuit. This type of insurance, which is both a cause and a consequence of the increasingly litigious nature of the United States, has driven up the cost of insurance in the US to the point where some companies offer discounts to limit or exclude legal costs and personal liability.

For the remaining \$375,000, Mr Clinton drew on a blind trust - an investment portfolio held jointly by himself and his wife that had been placed under third party control for the duration of his presidency.

While the source of the money used to pay the Paula Jones settlement is essentially a private matter, the fact that it was leaked by the White House indicates it wanted the information in the public domain. The news seemed designed to convey several messages to Mr Clinton's supporters and to the public.

The first was that the President was meeting the costs of the Paula Jones case himself,

and was not calling on either the charitable legal defence fund set up to help to defray his legal expenses or on rich friends for a loan. Either could land him in new political trouble.

The second was that the Clintons are not without resources of their own. Much has been made of the Clintons' contention that they lost money on the speculative Whitewater land deal in Arkansas, but more than a decade ago Hillary Clinton made almost instant profits in a cattle futures venture that was recommended to her by a friend and broker.

There were also reports that Mrs Clinton was especially disappointed by the Whitewater failure because she had hoped the investment would pay for their daughter Chelsea's university fees. College fees are a big expense for middle-class American parents.

The third message, given that the bulk of the money in the investment trust was said to come from Mrs Clinton's earnings as a lawyer in Arkansas, was that she was still "standing by her man" - even at the cost of their future financial security. Mrs Clinton was the main breadwinner through the Arkansas years, earning considerably more than her husband as governor of one of the poorest states in America.

The timing of the payment - which was reported to have been dispatched on Tuesday by Mr Clinton's lawyers - seemed designed to ensure that the Paula Jones case was closed before the drama of the Senate impeachment trial begins today. Ms Jones had instituted her case in 1995, stemming from an incident in the Arkansas capital, Little Rock, four years before when, she alleged, Mr Clinton had invited her to a hotel room and asked her to perform oral sex.

UN considers French plan to lift oil embargo on Iraq

THE FIRST glimpse of a possible break in the diplomatic log-jam over future United Nations policy on Iraq surfaced yesterday when the French government stepped forward with a controversial proposal to lift the eight-year oil embargo on the country and to create a scaled-down regime of weapons inspections.

As the Security Council was preparing last night to study the three-point proposal, there were tentative indications that Britain, customarily allied with the United States in opposing any dilution of UN measures on Iraq, may be willing to consider it as a way of bridging divisions on future Iraq policy. This could leave Washington isolated at the UN.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, one British official said London was not yet in a position to consider the lifting of the oil embargo. He went on to concede, however, that some trade-off may be possible in the

By DAVID USBORNE
in New York

Security Council involving ending the embargo and simultaneous lifting of new controls on Iraq to bar it from developing new weapons of mass destruction.

In Paris, the French Foreign Ministry issued a statement arguing that, in the wake of December's cruise missile strikes on Iraq by Britain and the US, any notion of returning to the status quo ante, involving both invasive inspections by the UN and the maintenance of all sanctions, would be unrealistic.

"France thinks that it is time for the Security Council to consider that no progress can be made by an illusory resumption of previous methods," it said. Daniel Vaillant, Minister for Parliamentary Relations, added: "France is proposing something that will allow us to get out of the current impasse."

The diplomatic moves coincided with fresh military activity yesterday over the northern Iraq no-fly zone. The Pentagon confirmed that US warplanes had fired on Iraqi anti-aircraft missile sites in the region. It was the third such incident this week. The no-fly zones are patrolled by both American and British jets.

"There are indications that coalition aircraft were fired upon at least once by at least one Iraqi surface-to-air missile," a spokesman said. "The coalition air crews acted in self-defence." He said all coalition planes returned safely and denied Iraqi claims that its forces had "hit" one "enemy" plane.

Under UN policy, Iraq is allowed to export a limited volume of oil. The revenue from the exports is under strict UN control and can only be spent on importing foods and medicines. It is unclear whether

France, which has long had an eye on helping Iraq to revive its oil industry, envisages maintaining such controls if the embargo itself is lifted.

More vexing is the issue of how controls on Iraq's suspected weapons programmes could be maintained without the return of the Uncom inspectors, the special UN commission charged with hunting down Iraq's armaments. Clearly suggesting that Uncom itself should be shelved, Paris said it envisaged a new inspection team "under a reformed commission, in order to guarantee its independence and reinforce its professionalism". This appeared to be a swipe at Richard Butler, the Uncom chief, who has recently denied allegations that his inspectors had become infiltrated by American spies.

Leading article, Review, page 3

IN BRIEF

Iran-British relationship warms

IRAN AND Britain are expected to upgrade their diplomatic ties to ambassadorial levels soon, after years of tension over the Salman Rushdie affair, an Iranian newspaper reported yesterday. It said the two countries had decided to appoint their current charges d'affaires as ambassadors.

Bosnia war crimes suspect buried

THOUSANDS of people yesterday attended the funeral of a Bosnian Serb war-crimes suspect. Dragan Gavovic was sought by the UN war crimes tribunal for raping and torturing Muslim women in 1992 and 1993, but was killed by French Nato soldiers as they tried to arrest him.

Editor held over report of 'coup'

A ZIMBABWEAN editor spent his second day detained by military police yesterday after his newspaper reported on the arrest of 23 soldiers for plotting a coup. The government has denied the report in the Standard newspaper which is edited by Mark Chavunduka, 34.

Security agency bans a Furby

THE AMERICAN National Security Agency has banned a Furby, a toy resembling an owl with tufts of hair and huge pink ears from its Fort Meade premises in Maryland. It is considered a threat to national security because it contains a computer chip that allows it to record sounds.

Whodunit wife denies murder

THE WEEKEND was meant as a Valentine's Day getaway for couples with a taste for murder mysteries. The highlight was an Agatha Christie-style whodunit performed by amateur actors, with the audience participating to identify the killer. The play was a hit. However, within hours a guest was found dead.

This is the strange scenario at the heart of a murder trial in Easton, Maryland, on the shore of Chesapeake Bay. Prosecutors contend that on 14 February last year, Kimberly Ericko, 32, returned to her room after the play with her husband, Stephen, and murdered him.

Mrs Ericko is accused of administering poison to her husband. Hours before, the couple had watched how, in the play, a groom died after sipping poison-laced champagne.

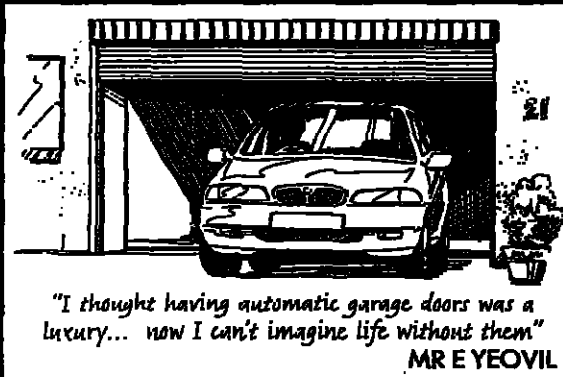
By DAVID USBORNE

Robert Dean, the prosecutor, told the jury that the couple had been having long-running marital difficulties and that Mrs Ericko stood to collect \$200,000 (£128,000) in life insurance on her husband's death.

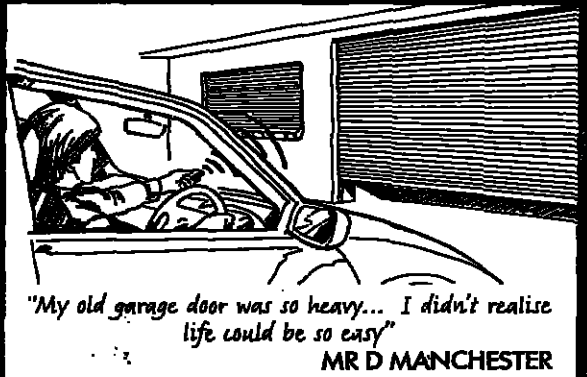
According to the defence, Mrs Ericko, who denies murder, left the hotel alone after the play to visit friends. When she returned she found her room filled with smoke. Stephen Ericko, 35, was dead.

Documents filed by the police say that Mrs Ericko had told friends that she wanted to kill her husband. She is alleged to have described how she would administer poison to paralyse him and then set fire to the room.

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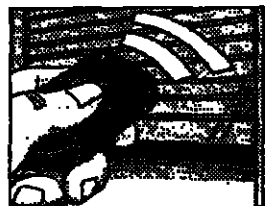
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Nigerians drive rebels from Freetown

THE REBEL army that invaded Freetown has been driven into the hills surrounding the Sierra Leone capital, according to the commander of the West African intervention force.

"The operation is almost complete," Cdr Timothy Shelpidi said yesterday in his first briefing on the military position since the rebels launched their attack on Freetown on 6 January. He said there were a few

BY ALLIEU IBRAHIM
KAMARA in Freetown
AND ALEX DUVAL SMITH

rebels hiding in the shanty towns around the Kissy area, in the east of the city, but he described these as isolated pockets.

Cdr Shelpidi said the intervention force, Ecomog, had suffered only light casualties, while rebel casualties numbered over 1,000 - but the in-

vaders had caused "colossal" damage to parts of Freetown.

As the fighting died down, Sierra Leone's rebels - widely seen as ruthless and with scant popular support - moved a step nearer to political legitimacy when their leader offered a ceasefire in return for his freedom.

The Sierra Leone president, Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, who is being guarded by Nigerian

troops, was due to hear today the conditions of the rebel leader, Foday Sankoh, through a United Nations intermediary. Mr Sankoh is being held in Conakry, capital of neighbouring Guinea.

It was not clear whether formal talks were being proposed by either party to end the civil war. But a senior UN representative suggested yesterday that President Kabbah was un-

likely to agree to Mr Sankoh's demand. Mr Sankoh, founder of the Revolutionary United Front, made the demand at talks in Conakry on Tuesday after being flown to Guinea from Freetown where he was being held in jail after his conviction for high treason and murder last October.

In Freetown yesterday, where sporadic gunfire was heard as Ecomog carried out

house-to-house searches in the east of the city, two Roman Catholic missionaries were released from captivity.

Ecomog said Maurizio Boa and Giuliano Pini had been used by the rebels as human shields during fighting on Monday. A Vatican spokesman said Ecomog soldiers initially as-

saulted the Italian priests, believing them to be European mercenaries fighting alongside

the rebels. A third Italian priest, Mario Guerra, was still being held by the rebels.

The UN official said that, besides his freedom, Mr Sankoh had asked for official recognition of the RUF, which has been accused by aid officials and civilians of atrocities against unarmed villagers.

Witnesses who fled eastern Freetown said the rebels had killed scores of civilians and

taken many hostages - including women and children - during their retreat from the city.

The UN refugee agency warned again yesterday of a possible humanitarian disaster in Freetown because hundreds of thousands of people have been trapped in their homes without water and unable to go outside to get food.

Leading article,
Review, page 3

Judge shifts goalposts in Anwar trial

A MALAYSIAN judge amended four corruption charges against the country's ousted finance minister Anwar Ibrahim yesterday, prompting the former cabinet member to protest he had been unfairly smeared by sex allegations.

"They already stripped me naked. Now they are amending the charges," a fuming Mr Anwar said during a break in his sex and corruption trial, which is now in its 10th week.

Mr Anwar was sacked and arrested in September, and later indicted on five counts each of corruption and sodomy. He has pleaded not guilty to all of the charges.

Prosecutors said their amendments involved only changes in the wording and did not alter the thrust of the corruption charges under initial examination at the High Court.

But the defence team said they narrowed the focus of the charges after the prosecution had spent over two months producing sordid testimony. Mr Anwar's chief counsel, Raja Aziz Raja Adrusse, said the prosecutors were now trying to avoid proving the allegations of sexual misconduct and sodomy. "They are seeking to procure a

BY K. RANANEE KRISHNAAN
in Kuala Lumpur

lower onus of proof," he said.

Legal experts said the prosecution was entitled to the move, but questioned its timing and motive. "The prosecution has the right to amend charges whenever it wishes, but many people are wondering why they have done so at this stage," an independent lawyer said.

Others asked why government lawyers had shamed Mr Anwar with lurid testimony if they had no intention of proving it. "I don't know whether it was more for public consumption," said R. R. Chelvarajah, vice-president of the Malaysian Bar Council.

High Court Judge Augustine Paul, who is both judge and jury in the trial at the centre of the current political turbulence in Malaysia, sided with the prosecution. "I'm of the view that it's no real substantive change," the judge said.

Mr Anwar's defence team countered later in the day, announcing that they planned to call the Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad, and three other cabinet ministers as witnesses in the trial. (Reuters)



Anwar Ibrahim's wife and daughter joining protesters outside the court in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. Reuters

River deaths force action against graft

THE COLLAPSE of a footbridge, killing at least 40 people hurled into the river below, has finally prompted a crackdown on corruption and shoddy work in the Chinese building industry.

"How can people live when they walk on bridges or pass by buildings, thinking they may be caught in a sudden collapse of such structures?" the Construction Minister, Yu Zhengsheng, said in a report yesterday. Over the past few years there have been repeated reports of problems with poorly built bridges, but few accidents were properly detailed in the media.

But this latest disaster, whose victims included 18 soldiers out for a jog, appears to have alerted the government to the problems.

The accident happened on 4 January in Qijiang county, on the outskirts of the western city of Chongqing.

Yesterday the China Daily said four people had been detained in an investigation and two removed from their jobs. Structural problems, sub-standard reinforced concrete and poor maintenance were the main causes of the collapse.

Mr Yu said the number of

BY TERESA POOLE
in Peking

complaints about poor construction had risen 50 per cent since 1997.

In another case, a highway in Yunnan province was closed days after opening because of subsidence caused by shoddy construction material.

As ever in China, corruption is often the cause of such problems. Corrupt companies and officials agree to cut corners and costs and pocket the money saved. Cadres can be bribed into giving safety and completion certificates, despite the sub-standard work.

The government is again making a determined effort to crack down on corruption generally, but the scale of the problem is overwhelming. Last year, it was announced yesterday, the country handled 108,828 cases of bribery and dereliction of duty.

Of more than 40,000 people investigated in the cases, 1,520 were government officials ranking above the county level and 7,065 were judicial and administrative officials, said Han Zhubin, the head of the Supreme People's Procuratorate.



ANOTHER PRICE CUT BY BRITISH GAS

Israel
election
murder
canda

AT'S SIX

Israel election burglary scandal

THE THEFT of confidential papers and computer disks from the Washington office of a US political consultant advising Ehud Barak, the leader of the Israeli Labour party, is injecting fresh venom into the Israeli election campaign.

The burglars entered the office of Stanley Greenberg, a prominent Democratic pollster, through an air vent and then cut a hole through the ceiling. Tal Silberstein, Mr Barak's campaign manager, said the thieves "knew exactly what they wanted because the only file taken was one dealing with the Israeli campaign".

The Israeli press yesterday compared the theft to the Watergate burglary of 1974 when a break-in at the Democratic Party headquarters orchestrated from the White House ultimately led to the resignation of President Richard Nixon. The run-up to the Israeli election, which takes place on 17 May, is particularly rancorous because the two leading candidates, Mr Barak and Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister, are competing against former colleagues.

Sergeant Joe Gentile, of the District of Columbia police, confirmed that the robbers entered the offices of Greenberg Quinlan Research late on Monday night or early Tuesday and stole confidential files. He said the police and the FBI were investigating the possibility that "certain documents were targeted".

Several members of the Labour party were quick to suggest that Mr Netanyahu's Likud party was behind the

By PATRICK COCKBURN
in Jerusalem

burglary, although Afiza Goren, Mr Barak's spokeswoman, said: "We cannot point to any guilty party and certainly have no idea who did this." Likud said it hoped the thieves would be caught.

Both Labour and Likud have hired American political consultants for the coming campaign. In the 1996 election Mr Netanyahu's victory was partly credited to Arthur Finkelstein, a right-wing American consultant, who advised him on tactics and strategy. Mr Greenberg has in the past played a leading role in advising President Bill Clinton.

The Labour party milked the incident for all it was worth yesterday, but was nervous of giving the impression that its political policies were being decided in the US. It said all important decisions on the election were made in Israel.

Mr Barak's campaign is already floundering because of the emergence of centrist candidates, such as the former chief of staff Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, who are convinced the Labour leader cannot beat Mr Netanyahu. Mr Barak also faced a fresh row at the Labour party convention yesterday because he wants to put his own allies high up on the Labour list for the Knesset elections. That would force a number of party veterans out of politics.

Hagai Meiron, a Labour Knesset member, left the party earlier in the week because he was "not built to serve in the court of a one-man ruler".



A Russian soldier at the Ruci bridge between Abkhazia and Georgia. Many believe Abkhazian separatists were provoked by factions within Russia

Scott McNee

Deadly harvest in an agricultural paradise

FRONTLINE ABKHAZIA

"I HAVE nothing left, I have no money and my belongings are burnt; but I can't live here like this; I must go back and if they kill me, they kill me." Zisa Dari is one of the 40,000 refugees driven out of Gali in the separatist Georgian province of Abkhazia by a new sweep of ethnic cleansing last May. Like many, she has moved only a few kilometres over the border to Zugdidi, the other side of the Inguri river, from where she watched the plumes of black smoke that marked the destruction of the Gali villages by the Abkhaz militia.

Under the presidency of Vladislav Ardzinba, the unrecognised Republic of Abkhazia has expelled almost all ethnic Georgians from the province in favour of the minority Abkhaz. Georgia already supports more than 300,000 displaced Georgians who fled during the civil war of 1992-93.

Abkhazia was known as the garden of Russia. For the refugees in Zugdidi, most of them farmers, the decision to risk crossing back over the border to gather crops is a simple choice between extreme hardship and possible death at the hands of the Abkhaz militia. Zisa and her family have decided to take the risk.

"In June my husband went back to our village. On his return he was taken by the Abkhaz and beaten and tortured.

He tried to run for the border but died before he reached Zugdidi. One time I too was captured; they beat me and told me that I was not allowed to move on their territory; but what can I do? I have to get food for my children."

Despite the danger, there is still a steady movement to and fro, usually undertaken by the older female family members who are considered least at risk from the partisan groups roaming the region. Many of the older residents, like Zisa, say they prefer to risk death in returning to what remains of

their villages than end their days cramped 13 to a room in a freezing schoolhouse.

Mine explosions are still a daily occurrence, and cross-border shooting has taken place as recently as the past month. Last September, Ardzinba requested a meeting with the Georgian President, Edward Shevardnadze, amid fears that renewed hostilities would break out. The talks have yet to materialise.

News of the planned meeting has not been well received. The shooting of three United Nations observers in Sukumi

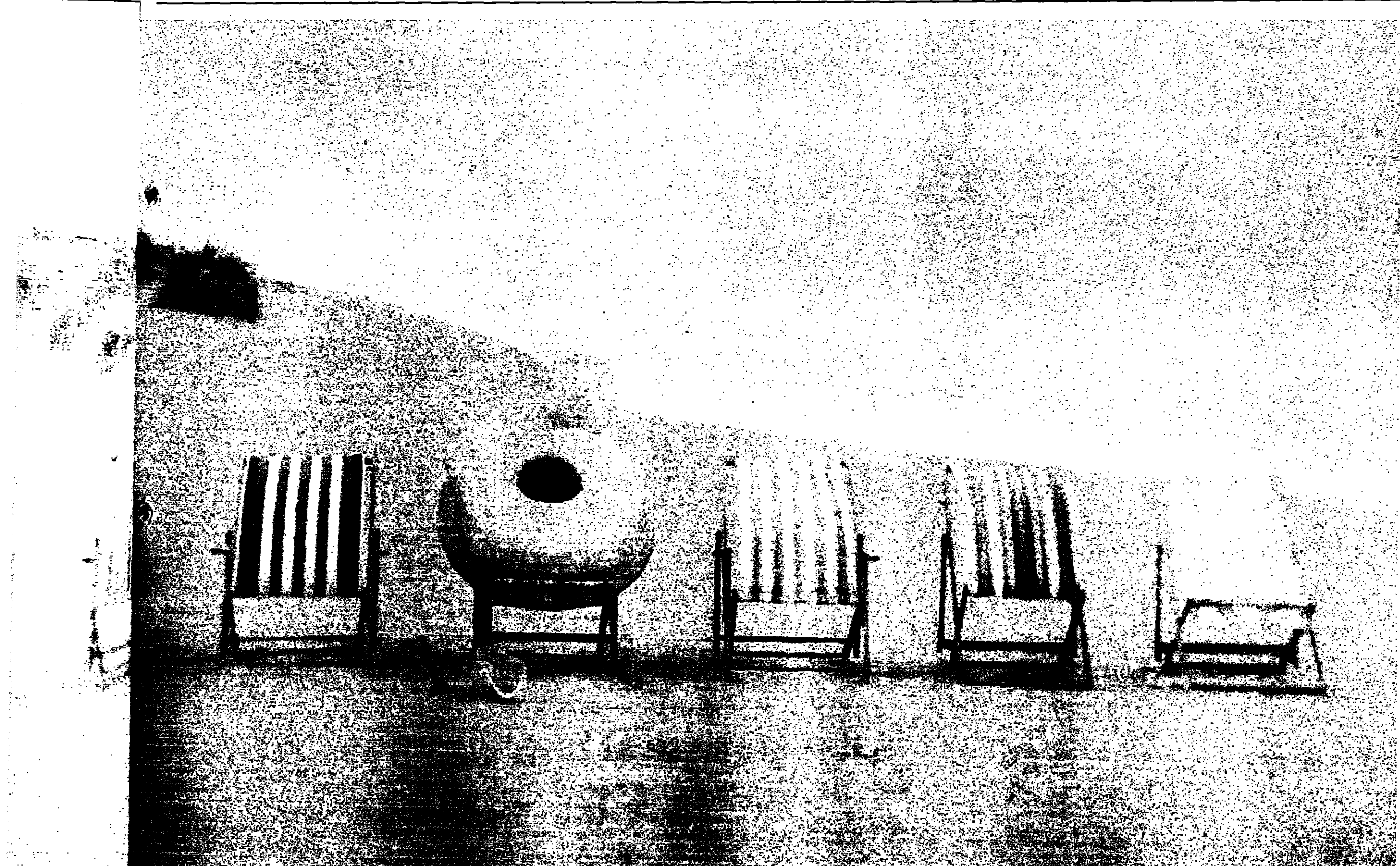
on 21 September was regarded by many as a direct attempt to undermine the negotiations. Tamaz Nadareishvili, chairman of the Supreme Council of Abkhazia in exile, supports Mr Shevardnadze's efforts in theory, but no longer feels that anything can be achieved by peaceful negotiation. "Some 300,000 people are homeless and have waited five years to return. We have no hope that politically this will be possible without war."

Mr Nadareishvili supports the popular belief that the Abkhazian separatists were strongly provoked and supported by certain factions within Russia who still oppose Georgian independence. How

else, he argues, could the ethnic Abkhaz, numbering only 80,000, have overthrown the majority Georgian population? While this view is shared by Zorab Zhvania, chairman of the Georgian parliament, he is swift to point out that the last thing Georgia needs is a deterioration in relations with their powerful next door neighbour.

"We are extremely interested in a well-balanced, very close, economic and cultural relationship with Russia. We don't want anybody in Russia to think that we will present any threat. But we demand equal relations, and that small countries have the right to enjoy their independence."

BETTIE JUDAH



WHAT'S SIX IN A ROW.

In 1998, British Gas made five gas price cuts. And in March we are introducing yet another for millions of customers.

KEEPING PRICES ON LOW. **British Gas** Home Energy

Business & City Editor, Jeremy Warner
News desk 0171-293 2636 Fax: 0171-293 2098
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BUSINESS

Brazil financial crisis sends world markets into turmoil

BRIEFING

IPC restructure to cut 200 staff

IPC, THE MAGAZINE publisher behind titles such as *Loaded* and *Country Life*, yesterday announced plans to cut about 200 staff and restructure its business into five divisions. The changes are designed to cut annual costs by about £6m. The cuts will raise fears that IPC has not been performing as well as expected since it was bought by a management team, backed by the venture capital group Cinven, for £800m twelve months ago.

Investors back BTR-Siebert merger



THE £88m merger between the engineering groups Siebert and BTR was approved overwhelmingly by shareholders in both companies yesterday. Despite suggestions of a revolt by institutional investors over the terms of the all-paper deal, Siebert shareholders voted 99 per cent in favour while BTR shareholders backed the merger by a similar

Carpetbagger drops out

STEPHEN MAJOR, the plumber from Lisburn, Northern Ireland who tabled a proposal for Bradford & Bingley to convert to a bank, yesterday dropped out of elections to the society's board. Mr Major said he had never wanted to be a director and was bowing out to avoid mud-slinging from the media. But he said he would still campaign for the society to convert. Bradford & Bingley's 2.5 million members are due to vote on his proposal, for the society to take steps towards conversion, at an annual general meeting on 26 April.

- Double blow sends share prices plunging across the globe
- \$41m bailout in doubt as Brazil abandons defence of currency
- Concern grows over China as \$3bn debts are revealed

THE WORLD'S financial markets plunged into turmoil yesterday following clear signs that the crisis in emerging markets is far from over.

Brazil abandoned its attempt to defend its currency, a condition of the rescue package it negotiated with the International Monetary Fund in November. The move triggered the resignation of Gustavo Franco, governor of the country's central bank, and called into question the future of the \$41.5bn bailout.

The Brazilian drama followed the earlier news that Guangdong Enterprises, the Chinese government's holding company for businesses in the province, had debts of \$2.94bn. Foreign investors in those businesses will be asked to provide new capital to refinance them.

The double whammy sent stock markets reeling, although shares in London and New York recovered from earlier lows.

The FTSE 100 index closed down nearly 184 points at 5,850, having dropped as much as 287 points. By noon in New York, the Dow Jones index was 158 lower at 9,316.86, after falling as much as 261 points in early trade.

The US Administration reacted with barely concealed nervousness to the Brazilian moves. A collapse of the Latin American economy would hit US trade very badly at a time when the trade deficit is already soaring, and problems on Wall Street would very quickly dent the Administration's reputation as a solid economic manager.

President Bill Clinton made a statement backing Brazil, and urging it to continue with reform. "We have a strong interest in seeing Brazil, with whom we have worked on so many important things around the world, carry forward with its economic reform plan and succeed," he said.

US officials consulted with

BY DIANE COYLE, ANDREW MARSHALL, LEA PATERSON AND ANDREW GARFIELD

other Group of Seven nations, and US Deputy Secretary of the Treasury, Larry Summers, who covers international affairs, cancelled a trip to New York. Mr Summers, along with Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, brokered the \$41.5bn deal to prop up Brazil's economy.

The International Monetary Fund made no comment. It provided \$18bn of last year's package, of which \$5.3bn has already been disbursed. Brazil can draw another \$4.5bn by late February as long as it meets the conditions of the package.

Deputy finance ministers from the G7 countries are due to meet on Saturday and finance ministers and central bank governors will meet in Bonn next month. The dire economic situation in Brazil and the danger that China will be the next emerging economy to plunge into crisis will be on the agenda.

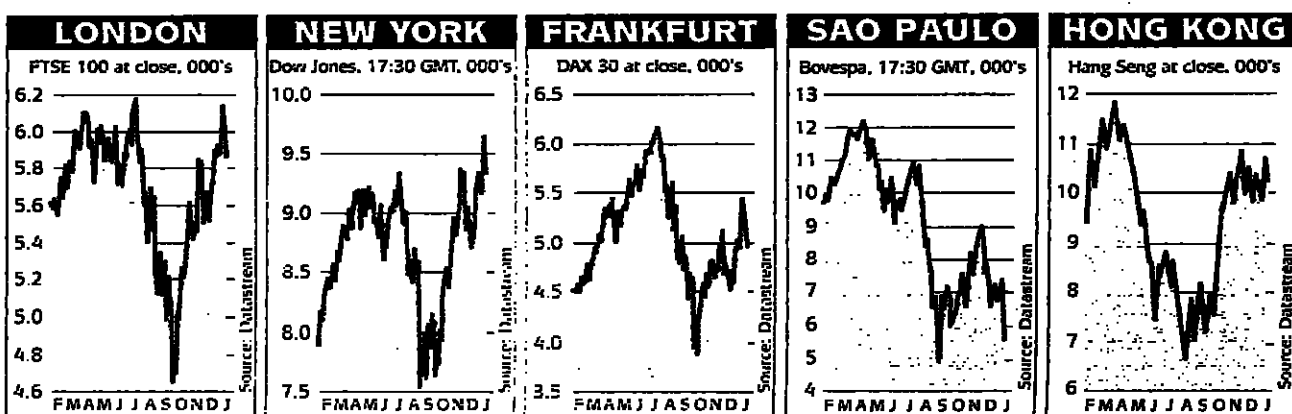
Brazil announced that its currency would trade in a new, wider range of 1.2 to 1.32 reais to the dollar, rather than the previous 1.12-1.22 reais. The rate fell immediately to the top of the new band, an effective 9 per cent devaluation. The move followed a renewal of massive capital flight, which reached \$1.2bn on Tuesday.

Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Brazil's president, pledged that congress would approve his government's budget-cutting plans, another key part of the IMF programme. He also announced plans to increase the tax on financial transactions.

Francisco Lopes, the new central bank governor, tried to stem speculation about further devaluation, and said Brazil had almost \$45bn in foreign exchange reserves as ammunition



New York traders surrounding the post for Telebras, the Brazilian telephone company, yesterday. American banks have about \$25.6bn of loans to Brazil



to defend the new range.

The Bovespa share price index had fallen 10 per cent in early trading and was closed for half an hour, but recovered to a 5 per cent fall by late afternoon.

US banks have around \$74bn of loans to Latin America, of which \$25.6bn is to Brazil, according to figures published by the Federal Reserve in October. Chase Manhattan, the biggest American lender to the region

with loans of \$13.6bn and recent owner of Banco Patrimonio de Investimentos, the country's third biggest investment bank, fell 33 per cent to \$70. Citigroup which is Brazil's eighth largest private sector bank fell 36.75 to \$49.

In London, National Westminster Bank was the hardest hit, its share price falling 10 per cent at one point, despite having minimal exposure to Latin America. Lloyds puts its total

loan exposure at £1.3bn, less than 0.8 per cent of total assets. HSBC has around \$2.5bn of Brazilian loans outstanding.

Stock markets in Madrid and Lisbon, perceived as having the largest exposure to Latin America, were worst hit. Madrid's benchmark index tumbled by 6.8 per cent, while in Portugal leading shares fell by 3.7 per cent.

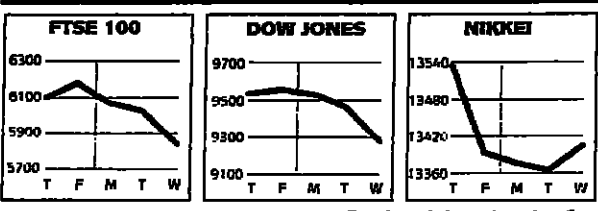
In Germany shares in Deutsche Bank fell 7.3 per cent,

while rival Dresdner saw its shares tumble by 8.1 per cent. The benchmark Dax Xetra index closed down 214.01 points, or 4.1 per cent, at 4982.12.

In the Far East, concerns about China's debts sent Hong Kong's Hang Seng index down 437.79 points to close at 10,273.77.

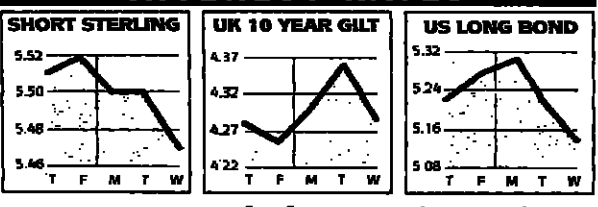
Investor flight to quality sent US and Western European bonds soaring, and yields fell to near-record lows.

STOCK MARKETS



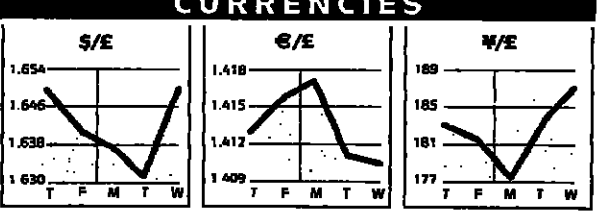
Index	Close	Change	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	5850.10	-183.50	6195.50	4599.20	2.76
FTSE 250	4874.40	-102.70	5070.90	4247.60	3.41
FTSE 350	2761.10	-82.20	2899.10	2210.40	2.86
FTSE All Share	2665.81	-77.52	2886.52	2143.53	2.91
FTSE SmallCap	2109.60	-31.20	2273.80	1834.40	3.82
FTSE Fledgling	1165.10	-15.40	1311.10	1046.20	4.29
FTSE AIM	806.50	-6.30	1146.90	761.30	1.23
FTSE Europe 100	2706.83	-116.17	3079.22	2018.15	...
FTSE Europe 300	1169.55	-46.26	1332.07	880.63	1.06
Dow Jones	9316.86	-158	9647.96	7400.30	1.64
Nikkei	13403.60	-42.63	13732.95	12787.90	1.08
Hang Seng	10273.77	-437.79	11926.16	6544.79	3.37
Dax	4982.12	-268.30	5162.17	3833.71	1.74
S&P 500	1224.93	-14.51	1278.05	923.32	1.29
Nasdaq	2302.97	-17.78	2396.30	1957.08	0.30
Soranto 300	6614.40	-86.43	7337.70	5320.90	1.64
Brazil Bovespa	3594.43	-261.12	4411.39	4578.69	10.50
Belgium Bel20	3415.15	-81.68	3713.21	2426.69	1.91
Amsterdam AEX	507.29	-28.95	540	356.58	1.94
France CAC 40	3958.72	-141.98	4404.94	2881.21	2.04
Milan MIB30	34218.00	-1583.00	44239.00	24175.00	1.19
Madrid IBEX 35	9321.70	-688.80	10989.80	6869.90	1.99
Irish Overall	5067.56	-166.31	5581.70	3727.57	1.41
S Korea Comp	633.03	-1.84	651.95	277.87	0.56
Australia ASX	2822.00	-24.90	2902.90	2386.70	3.16

INTEREST RATES



Index	3 month	6 month	1 year	Yr chg	10 year	Yr chg	Long bond	Yr chg
UK	5.89	-1.60	5.45	-2.03	4.29	-1.71	4.34	-1.62
US	5.03	-0.56	5.06	-0.56	4.71	...	5.14	...
Japan	0.54	-0.18	0.55	-0.13	1.79	-0.08	2.70	0.22
Germany	3.18	-0.38	3.11	-0.72	3.71	-1.33	4.68	-0.95

CURRENCIES



Index	3 month	6 month	1 year	Yr chg	10 year	Yr chg	Long bond	Yr chg
Dollar	1.6493	+1.82c	1.6342	...	0.6063	-0.67p	0.6119	...
Euro	1.4102	-0.13c	1.4078	...	1.1700	+1.54c	1.1665	...
Yen	187.22	+¥4.51	214.83	...	113.43	+¥1.44	131.51	...
£ Index	99.00	+0.40	104.80	...	104.00	+0.20	110.20	...

OTHER INDICATORS

Index	3 month	6 month	1 year	Yr chg	10 year	Yr chg	Long bond	Yr chg
Brent Oil (\$)	11.01	-0.47	14.98	...	115.40	3.00	112.04	...
Gold (\$)	286.25	-2.40	283.15	...	164.40	3.00	159.61	...
Silver (\$)	5.19	-0.17	5.59	...	Base Rates	6.00	7.25	...

TOURIST RATES

Country	Rate	Country	Rate
Australia (\$)	2.4834	Mexico (nuevo peso)	14.56
Austria (schillings)	18.85	Netherlands (guilders)	3.0225
Belgium (francs)	55.44	New Zealand (\$)	2.8882
Canada (\$)	2.4253	Norway (krone)	11.91
Cyprus (pounds)	0.7955	Portugal (escudos)	274.12
Denmark (krone)	10.28	Saudi Arabia (rials)	5.9723
Finland (markka)	8.1744	Singapore (\$)	2.6357
France (francs)	9.0167	Spain (pesetas)	227.88
Germany (marks)	2.6933	South Africa (rand)	9.6593
Greece (drachma)	446.76	Sweden (krone)	12.51
Hong Kong (\$)	12.32	Switzerland (francs)	2.2041
Ireland (pounds)	1.0796	Thailand (bahts)	55.29
India (rupees)	62.63	Turkey (liras)	51.0690
Israel (shekels)	6.1790	USA (\$)	1.6013
Italy (lira)	2670		
Japan (yen)	179.09		
Malaysia (ringgits)	5.9733		
Malta (lira)	0.6024		

Source: Thomas Cook

Green still wants Sears despite investor handout

PHILIP GREEN, the retail entrepreneur stalking Sears, is still interested in launching a formal bid for the company and will reveal his hand in the next few days. The news came after Sears announced a downbeat Christmas trading statement and the sale of its Creation store card.

It has sold the former Sears Card operation to two French banks for £141m. Sears shareholders will receive a special payment of 141p per share, a far higher figure than earlier estimates. Sears also said it is in discussions regarding the sale of a number of properties with net book value of £134m.

Though Sears seemed confident it had "spiked Mr Green's guns", the retail entrepreneur appeared undaunted yesterday. "They've given money to every-

BY NIGEL COPE, Associate City Editor

one else so it's about time they gave some to the shareholders," he said. "But it doesn't change anything. We are studying the position. I will be discussing the situation with my advisers and we'll take it from there."

Mr Green has just returned to Britain after spending the Christmas holidays abroad. He has already had a 340p approach rejected as the board felt it had too many conditions attached. However, it is by no means certain that Mr Green will increase his price.

As an analyst commented: "Given the Sears management track record so far, would you rather have 340p or 141p for the company in April and leave them in charge?"



Sir Bob Reid (left), chairman of Sears, has not succeeded in spiking the guns of Philip Green

Sears has sold its Creation Financial Services division to Groupe Cofinoga and Banque Nationale de Paris. The £141m price tag was higher than earlier expectations of £110m-£120m.

Sears' trading statement showed that the group is continuing to suffer from fragile consumer confidence and a weak portfolio of formats. In the 23 weeks to 9 January its clothing division, which takes in Miss Selfridge, Richards and Adams

childrenswear, saw sales increase 5 per cent on last year, but fell 1 per cent on a like-for-like basis. Over the same period sales at Freemans, Sears' mail-order operation, fell 5 per cent.

Mr Green had been waiting to see the trading update before making his next move. His key challenge is to win over Sears' major shareholder, Phillips & Drew, which holds 24 per cent. Sears shares closed 25p higher at 310.5p

Morgan shares plummet on profit warning

BY MICHAEL HARRISON

SHOCK WAVES reverberated through the engineering sector yesterday after Morgan Crucible, the industrial ceramics group, issued a profits warning and announced 1,000 jobs losses worldwide.

The warning sent Morgan Crucible shares down by 30 per cent and prompted sharp falls in other engineering stocks, the worst hit being other companies exposed to overseas markets.

Morgan Crucible said that profits for the year just ended would be 15-20 per cent lower than the £108m recorded in the previous year. The group said it was responding with a "major attack" on overheads and manning levels and the disposal of businesses with combined turnover of £200m-£300m a year.

The 1,000 redundancies will cost the group £15m and will be spread across Europe, Asia and America. The group declined to say how many jobs losses there would be in the UK where it employs 4,000 out of a group total of 15,000.

Vic Maudrell, the board director running the group's technical ceramics division, is also stepping down and is in line for a pay-off of up to £360,000. He is on a two-year contract and earned £180,000 last year.

Ian Norris, chief executive, said that the group had been hit by a downturn in orders from several of its major customers, including the steel, semiconductor, car and aerospace industries. However, Morgan Crucible is maintaining its dividend and says it is optimistic that profits will increase in the second half of this year.

Morgan Crucible shares fell 70p to 183.5p, wiping £182m from its market capitalisation. Other engineering stocks fell in its wake, with Bodycote off by 9 per cent, IMI off by 8 per cent, Cookson by 7 per cent, and Johnson Matthey by 6 per cent.

November and December are usually highly profitable months for Morgan Crucible but last year the group was hit by cuts in inventory levels and deferral or order into the new year.

In the US, the influx of Asian steel imports meant that fewer blast furnace refurbishments were carried out, reducing demand for Morgan Crucible's refractory products.

The group was also affected by the rescheduling of component orders following the General Motors strike and production problems at Boeing. In semiconductor, destocking and deferral of orders led to a £12m reduction in business while currency translation knocked another £3.5m off profits because of the strong pound. Morgan Crucible said the downturn had been "swift and savage," adding that the cost-cutting measures it had now put in place would hit profits in the first half of the current year.

But it forecast that benefits would begin to flow through in the second six months and would then add "significantly" to profits in future years, provided that there was no further marked deterioration in trading.

Outlook, page 17

Jobless fall 'just a statistical blip'

BY LEA PATERSON

THERE WAS an unexpected piece of good news for the Government yesterday as unemployment fell to its lowest level in almost two decades.

But economists warned that jobless totals would almost certainly rise again in coming months, and said the figures should be no barrier to another UK interest-rate cut.

The number of people claiming benefit tumbled by 14,000 in December to 1.31 million, the lowest level since June 1980. Unemployment also fell on the Government's preferred ILO measure, a more broadly-based estimate of the jobless total. A

sharp fall in the number of women out of work helped to take the ILO measure down by 26,000 to 1.79 million between September and November.

Employment reached record levels, said the Office for National Statistics, with services industries such as banking and finance leading job creation. But jobs continued to be lost in manufacturing: in the three months to November the number of manufacturing jobs was 1.5 per cent lower than in the same period in 1997, according to official figures.

City analysts, who had expected a rise in both measures of unemployment, called the fall in the jobless total a statistical blip. Some said mild December weather may have boosted the construction industry. Others attributed the fall in unemployment to the Government's welfare-to-work programme.

Sudhir Junankar, associate director of economic analysis at the Confederation of British Industry, said: "The slight falls in underlying unemployment are welcome but seem unlikely to continue given other evidence of an increasing slowdown in the economy. Fur-

ther interest-rate cuts are still needed to stave off the danger of an outright recession."

Ken Wattret at Paribas said: "The real economy tells us that things will be pretty nasty in the first and second quarters. From the perspective of interest rates, nothing has really changed."

Dharshini David at HSBC said: "Surveys indicate that employment will fall and unemployment rise over the coming months. Services job creation in particular is likely to tail off." The data would have a limited impact on the rate-setting Monetary Policy Committee, said Ms David.

BUSINESS

Savings

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Per room per night

Brazil's day of reckoning comes despite the bailout

News Analysis:
The \$41bn rescue package from the IMF was just putting off the inevitable

BY DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

THERE IS no more sure sign of an impending crisis than capital flight. Ever since it reached agreement two months ago on a \$41bn rescue package led by the International Monetary Fund, Brazil has been kissing goodbye to billions of dollars fleeing to safer havens overseas.

In December, it was more than \$50bn. Up to Tuesday about \$1bn had left in January, with another \$1.2bn on Tuesday itself. Altogether, the total capital flight in recent months has passed the \$50bn mark.

No wonder Professor Rudiger Dornbusch at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has joked that the IMF's new telephone number is 1-800-BAILOUT. Yesterday's devaluation, resignation of the central bank governor and financial market implosion in Brazil confirmed the worst fears of the Fund's critics. Its rescue package, pumping in taxpayers' funds, had given investors enough time to get their money out of Brazil before what many saw as an inevitable speculative attack on the currency.

The emergency loan, of which the UK's share amounts to \$1bn, was due to be doled out to the Brazilian government in tranches subject to it satisfying the terms of an IMF adjustment programme. The second instalment is due to be handed over next month.

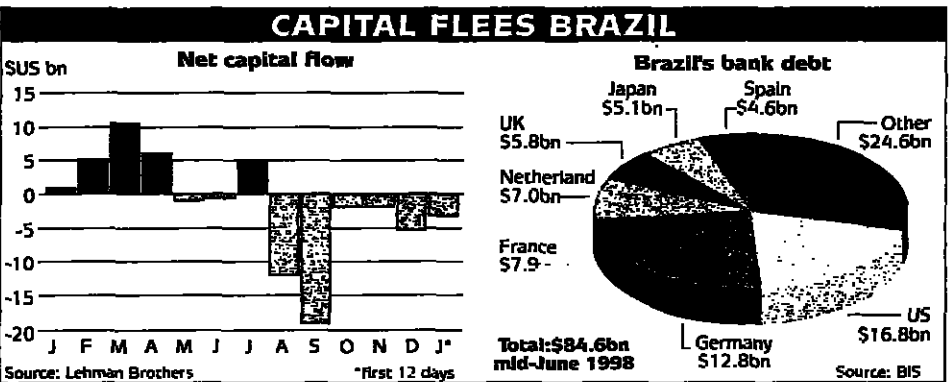
The loans were intended to tide the country over on its repayments on international loans, mostly short-term, of which \$60bn will come due during 1999. In effect, the IMF would ensure that commercial banks and other investors in Brazil got paid on old loans so that they would continue to make new loans.

The plan was controversial, with little support among the governments of the G7 leading economies. Some, including France and Germany, were bitterly opposed. They argued that it created more "moral hazard", whereby banks would continue to make too many risky loans on the assumption the authorities would always bail them out.

The decision to fix the Brazilian



Gustavo Franco (left) who quit as Brazil's central bank president, and Francisco Lopes, the deputy who replaces him, at a press conference yesterday. Brazil may now be forced to renegotiate foreign debts



currency, allowing it to depreciate only in tiny steps, was also unwelcome. Brazil has a huge balance of payments deficit amounting to 4 per cent of its gross domestic product, and without a devaluation it would stay bigger for longer, increasing the country's need for foreign capital.

But strong US support, given the exposure of the US banking system to Latin America, swung the day. The alternative to the IMF rescue, it was argued, was a new panic in the international financial markets, based on the heels of Russia's default and the collapse of Long-Term Capital Management.

In addition, Brazil's legacy of hyperinflation - peaking at more than 2,700 per cent a year in the early 1990s - until the intro-

duction of a new currency, the real, in 1994, made President Cardoso reluctant to contemplate a big devaluation.

Yet only days after the formal agreement with the IMF had been signed last month, the rescue plan ran into trouble. Brazil's congress voted against the first measures Fernando Henrique Cardoso, the President, had proposed to cut government spending and raise taxes. The plan to cut the deficit from 8 per cent to 5.5 per cent of GDP - equivalent to a reduction of more than \$20bn - fell at the first hurdle.

Combined with interest rates of around 30 per cent, the plan certainly set Brazil on course for a recession this year. The IMF downgraded its forecast from 2 per cent growth in GDP to a 1

per cent fall in 1999, and other forecasters are more pessimistic. For example, HSBC was predicting a 2.1 per cent drop before yesterday's crisis.

According to David Lubin, HSBC's Latin American economist, now that the IMF loan and fiscal adjustment have failed, the only alternative is a devaluation and renegotiation of Brazil's foreign debts. "There is no alternative now to making private lenders share some of the pain," he said.

Others reckon that the government and international authorities will be reluctant to take this route, and will instead try to shore up the credibility of the existing package. Anna Gaworska of Lloyds Bank said: "I think everything possible would be done to avoid a renegotiation of external debt."

To clear the way for an overhaul of the foreign exchange regime, Brazil's central bank president, Gustavo Franco, quit yesterday and was replaced by one of his deputies.

Although Brazil might be tempted to introduce tough capital controls to prevent further

Are shares really worth less today?

A DAY like yesterday, with the Footsie losing some 5 per cent, is one of those days when people tend to ponder questions about the valuation of equities. Are shares really worth 5 per cent less than they were a few hours earlier? Which of the many forms of valuing shares are more appropriate? Is there such a thing as a fundamental valuation?

I would not pretend to be able to answer these questions, but I have found a couple of recent papers extremely helpful in sorting out the various issues that equity valuation involves. One focuses on the UK, the other on the US.

The UK paper actually comes from Montreal, from the latest issue of *The International Bank Credit Analyst*. Myles Zybkow, one of the editors, concludes that the period of under-performance of UK equities is about to come to an end. Under-performance? Yes, the market has done pretty well in absolute terms but relative to the US our market has not done well during the 1990s. This is in sharp contrast to the 1980s, when UK shares did much better than US.

The argument developed here is that the great burst of share prices during the 1980s was in response to the supply-side reforms of the British economy that took place. True, similar reforms also occurred in the US, but because the UK economy started from so much lower a base, there was more scope for improvement. This was recognised by the markets, which duly marked shares up.

During the 1990s, however, it was US industry that carried out the great restructuring. There were several aspects to this: takeovers and mergers, downsizing of workforces, a surge in investment, particularly in information technology. This has improved performance, which again has been reflected in share prices.

However, there are weaknesses in the US corporate scene. Profits have not done as well as headlines suggest, as recent earnings growth has been bolstered by one-off events.



HAMISH MCRAE

UK shares have relatively little downside risk, at least relative to US securities

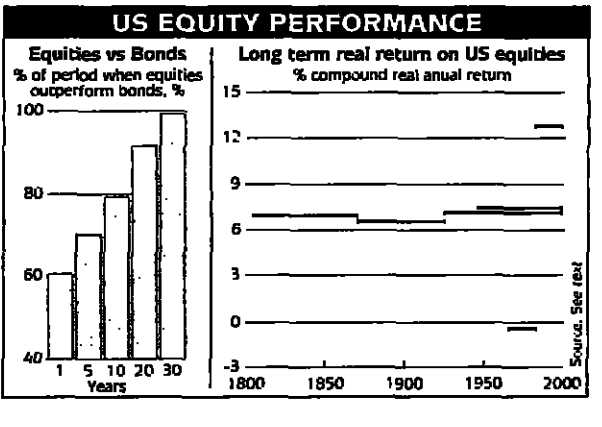
By contrast, there is more scope for increases in the earnings of UK companies. Investment is growing and the wage bill is falling. Corporate profits as a share of GDP are close to the peak of the late 1980s. Further, falling bond yields have made UK equities look cheap relative to bonds. Only on four occasions in the last 50 years have shares looked so cheap relative to gilts.

The moral of all this is that UK shares have relatively little downside risk and considerable upside potential, at least relative to US securities. Expect short-term volatility, but build modest UK positions and sell US ones.

Implicit in this view is the assumption that US shares are overvalued. That has certainly been the position of the Bank Credit Analyst team for some time. A more developed analysis of US equity market valuations comes from Sushil Wadhawani, currently at Tudor Investment Corporation, previously equity strategist at Goldman Sachs, and one of the most thoughtful market analysts here in London.

The core ideas of his paper, "The US Stock Market and the Global Economic Crisis", to be published in next month's *National Institute Economic Review*, are: first, that the US equity market is indeed highly valued by historical standards; second, that there are above-average risks associated with the world economy at the moment (I suppose Brazil counts as one of those);

Dr Wadhawani develops the argument much further, looking at various justifications for the present level of US share prices and testing each of these. But perhaps the big lesson of both these studies is simply that, while equities are and will remain the best place for people to hold savings over a very long period, timing entry into and exit from any share market is of overwhelming importance. Is investment just timing, then? Perhaps. But maybe also patience.



COMPANY RESULTS

Name	Turnover (£)	Pre-tax (£)	EPS	Dividend	Pay day	X-div
Birmingham City (F)	8,337m (7,622m)	-3,668m (1,125m)	-7.23p (2.52p)	-	-	-
Dunelm Group (F)	1,453m (1,318m)	68.8m (76.3m)	11.5p (12.5p)	3.5p (2.9p)	06.04.99	01.03.99
Dudley Jackson Group (F)	13,427m (13,425m)	2,304m (1,651m)	11.53p (8.12p)	2.5p (2.0p)	12.04.99	25.01.99
FI Group (F)	108,88m (71,23m)	7,54m (4,51m)	2.82p (1.69p)	0.53p (0.43p)	07.04.99	25.01.99
Hutton Holdings (F)	97,32m (84,71m)	1.3m (5.74m)	18.54p (8.22p)	18.30p (2.10p)	18.03.99	25.01.99
Wage Group (F)	12,870m (10,988m)	1,428m (8,805m)	6.10p (5.48p)	2.13p (1.91p)	25.02.99	25.01.99

(F) - Final (F) - Interim

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Birmingham Airport
Birmingham City
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Brentwood
Bristol
Cambridge
Chester
Dublin
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Fareham
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Lancaster
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Leicester

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Swansea
Swindon
Teesside
Taunton
Wakefield
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Guildford
Haydock
Hemel Hempstead
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Banks mauled as Brazil spooks FTSE

EQUITIES SUFFERED ONE of their worst poundings as Brazil's currency crisis hit the stock market.

What amounted to a devaluation caused widespread concern around the world, and Footsie was in ragged retreat from the opening. At one time it was off 287.1 points, but in busy two-way trading the index managed to reduce its deficit to 183.5 points, closing at 5,850.1.

The index began the year at 5,566.1. Its best close last week was 6,148.8, although it hit a new trading high of 6,195.6.

Despite the slump there were indications that institutional investors, who seemed happy to chase shares in a mad scramble last week, had not completely faded from the scene. The late rally stemmed from determined buying at the knockdown prices produced by the earlier panic.

Not only blue chips were in the firing line: the mid cap index crashed 102.7 points to 4,874.4 and the small cap 31.2 to 2,108.6. Both finished well above their lows. Government stocks rose by up to 75p.

Trading was again heavy, with share turnover topping 1.1 billion.

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

BPB, following a share buyback at 180p, was the most traded stock with turnover put at 34.5 million. The shares fell 8.75p to 188p.

Banks suffered the severest mauling as the market fretted over their exposure to Latin America, and those with long memories recalled the crashing impact of past regional defaults. Standard Chartered lost 84p (after 96p) to 742p and National Westminster Bank 105p (after 128p) to 1,066p.

HSBC was off 125p to 1,628p and Lloyds TSB 43p to 821.5p. The

gloom encompassed other financials, with insurer Royal & Sun Alliance 39p down at 483p and Prudential down 55p at 899p.

In such an unfriendly environment, the high flying telecom shares were also sounding the retreat, with Vodafone 35p down at 1,039.5p and Energis 51p at 1,380p. But high flying Colt Telecom, seen by all as particularly vulnerable to any darkening climate, restricted its fall to 19p at 1,018p.

Dixons resisted the slump, gaining 44p to 960p, a peak, as its results were in line with best expectations. Whitbread, with a moderately cheerful trading statement, put on 8p to 775.5p, but Allied Domecq continued to suffer from its sober Christmas trading message, falling a further 19p to 497p. The Allied gloom again unsettled Bass, off 18.5p at 786.5p, and Scottish & Newcastle, 28.5p at 684.5p.

Zeneca, the drugs group, was ruffled by stories that its would-be partner, Astra of Sweden, could be snatched away. Roche, the big Swiss pharmaceutical group, was said to be on the verge of mounting a bid for Astra, a development

that would leave Zeneca standing alone and forlorn at the altar. The shares fell 71p to 2,673p.

Sears, on the sale of its credit card business, gained 25p to 310.5p. Retail entrepreneur Philip Green

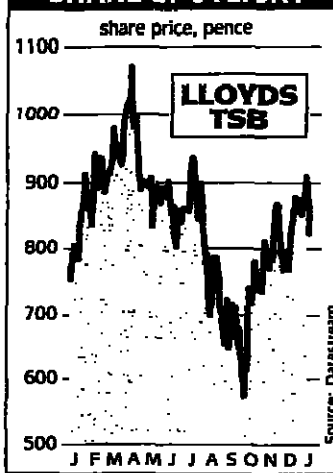
ON-LINE, an obscure little computer games business, says it is not involved in any corporate talks, but even so it is comfortably leading the 1999 stock market race.

The shares climbed a further 12p to 57.5p against 16.5p on Monday. Two directors, chairman Michael Hodges (50,000) and Clem Chambers (100,000), have each "reluctantly" sold shares to improve liquidity. Two years ago the price topped 100p.

still hovers: he has bid 340p a share although he has not won the backing of the board. WH Smith, said to be expanding its Internet retailing, was 20.5p higher at 537p.

Encouraging trading statements helped Selfridges 6.5p better to

SHARE SPOTLIGHT



213.5p. Limelight 3p to 33.5p and education group Nord Anglia 14p to 142.5p. IT group Vega was lifted 30p to 485p.

But trading gloom again took its toll: Morgan Crucible collapsed 79p to 183.5p, engineer Cirquel, with sales down 12 per cent and would-be bidders retreating, 68.5p to 134p; scarves maker Yorkdyke 20.5p off at 56.5p and tea group Whittard

215p to 69.5p. Caution from software group Pegasus lowered the shares 37.5p to 382.5p.

It was ironic that on such a fraught day the Guardian Royal Exchange takeover story was

TAKEOVER rumours swirled on the undercard, with T Clarke, a construction group, and Zotefoams, a chemical operation, in the firing line. Clarke rose 14p to 112.5p and Zotefoams 10.5p to 90p. Both shares are well below their best levels.

The rumoured predators were said to be foreign; Clarke, it was claimed, was in the sights of a continental group, while Zotefoams had attracted an American suitor.

given another whirl. It had little impact on the shares, lifting them just 0.5p to 337.5p. It was suggested that AXA, the French group seen at the head of the bidding queue, was on the verge of launching a fundraising exercise to back a deal.

AXA was said to be raising £1bn, which could tie in with suggestions that it intends to focus on overseas operations. Talk has been that the bid price will be around 400p. GRE is said to have rejected a 360p shot.

Abbot, an oil services group, tumbled 24.5p to 141.5p in late trading as rumours circulated that its proposed merger with Norway's Prosafe group had been called off.

In busy trading AromaScan, the electronic "nose" group, edged forward 0.25p to 10.25p, its highest since a rescue rights issue was made last year. The revamped group, thought to be attracting institutional interest, reports results later this month. KS Biomedix rose 18p to 314.5p in a late response to progress on its osteoarthritis drug.

Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries, in a takeover tussle with Marston Thompson & Evershed, did itself little good by reporting first-quarter sales below expectations: the shares fell 17.5p to 447.5p.

SEAQ VOLUME: 1.13 billion
SEAQ TRADES: 88,030
GILTS INDEX: 115.98 +0.81

Investment: If the IT group's directors are taking profits, should investors as well?

FI board shares £15m windfall

BY PETER THAL LARSEN

THE BOARD of FI Group yesterday shared a windfall of more than £15m when a group of directors took advantage of the computer services company's strong share price performance to offload 4.7 million shares.

Hilary Cropper, the chief executive who personally pocketed close to £5.5m from the sale, defended the decision. "Some of us have a lot of our wealth tied up in that business," she said, adding that the directors still had a combined 6.5 per cent stake. They have also agreed not to sell any more shares for 12 months.

The sight of directors selling large chunks of stock did not rattle investors, who scrambled to snap them up. It is understood that it took Warburg Dillon Read, FT's broker, just five minutes to place the shares with institutional investors.

Nevertheless, investors might reasonably ask whether they too should be taking profits in FI. The company has been one of the best-performing information technology stocks on the London exchange, doubling in value last year. It is also among the most highly rated, trading on an eye-popping 63 times expected full-year earnings.

Not that FI is giving investors any cause for concern. Results for the six months to 31 October, released yesterday, showed pre-tax profits rising by 75 per cent to £7.5m on turnover up 53 per cent to £109m.

The results included a contribution from IIS Infotech, the Indian computer group FI bought at the end of 1997 and which is already bringing in business. In the half, FI signed a £20m three-year IT outsourcing contract with London Electricity that requires some work to be done outside the UK to save costs.

Lower wage costs in India also boosted FI's margins, which rose to 6.5 per cent, up more than a percentage point in the half year. Meanwhile, Ms Cropper sounded upbeat on FI's growth prospects. She believes that over time its largest customers - who account for 70 per cent of revenues - will entrust more of their IT spending to FI. Work on the millennium bug, which yields 15 per cent of revenues, will fall off, but it will be replaced by preparations for the introduction of the euro in the UK and for electronic commerce.

Shares GOING up yesterday were few and far between but Limelight, the Manchester-based makers and retailers of fully-fitted kitchens, bedrooms, bathrooms and conservatories, managed a 3p rise to 33.5p.

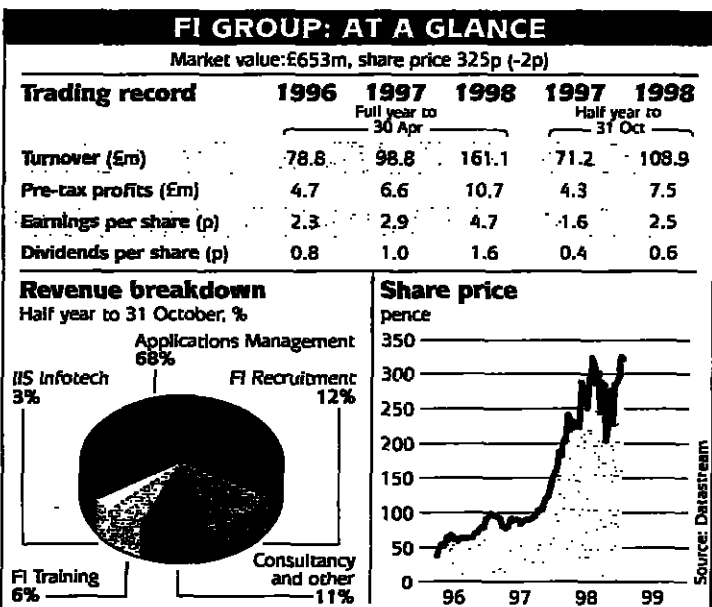
The company, which trades under various names - Sharps, Moben, Dolphin and Kitchens Direct - issued a trading statement saying simply that trading remained tough in the final quarter of the year, but Limelight had performed in line with expectations in 1998 and the current year had begun reasonably well.

In the January sale period - traditionally the peak season - sales were 8 per cent up on last year: quite an achievement at a time when many high-street retailers are feeling the pinch. However, the company insists it is still too early to take any firm position on the outlook for trading after January.

Some of the success is down to increased advertising and promotion, but it is likely that falling mortgage rates are encouraging home owners to plough some of the money they save on mortgages back into home improvements.

Limelight's shares have not been spectacular performers since they were floated at 189p three years ago, and the path has generally been downward. But Andrew Stanway, who stepped up to the post of chief executive after a management shakeup, has succeeded in taking out costs and sold the loss-making Portland Windows.

Richard Ratner, of brokers Seymour Pierce, now rates the shares a speculative buy. He forecasts a rebound from a £12m loss after restructuring costs in 1997 to a profit of £2m and earnings of 5.6p a share last year, rising to £11m and 7.80p in 1999.



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Hilary Cropper: 'No barriers to growth' in FI's markets

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Mr Burke, the office clerk who got to the top

PEOPLE AND BUSINESS
BY JOHN WILLCOCK

THE YORKSHIREMAN who steered Bristol & West out of its building society status and into the arms of Bank of Ireland two years ago is standing down as chief executive after 34 years with the same institution.

John Burke, 56, is one of a dying breed: a man who worked his way up from office clerk to boss of a financial institution with assets of over £13bn. Mr Burke says this career path is "sadly not likely to happen too often in the future".

Yesterday he said he was standing down as chief executive to become vice-chairman of Bristol & West. It's a long way from Mr Burke's first job, in the Plymouth office he joined in November 1964. "There was a big gap in the office between the secretary at the back and the counter - they thought I was a big enough lad to fill it," he recalls.

When he became the society's youngest-ever branch manager at Truro, Cornwall, in 1968, the society had assets of just £40m. Mr Burke moved to head office in 1978 and got the top job in 1993, steering the society through demutualisation and subsequent sale to the Bank of Ireland four years later. He will be succeeded by Jeff Warren, finance director of Bristol & West since 1992.

IN Great Railway Journeys on BBC2 on Tuesday night, presenter Michael Portillo returned to Spain - the land of his ancestors - and was the very picture of relaxation. He journeyed in great comfort, at speeds of 300kph, in modern, shiny trains, in a trip which took in Granada, Seville, Madrid and Salamanca. He told us, clearly proud of Spain, that if the TGV-type train was more than five minutes late at Madrid everyone got all their fare back. The train was, in the event, five minutes early.

In the UK, of course, we have learnt not to expect such speed, comfort or compensation from our privatised system. Who is to blame? Ian Gilmour, the ex-Forty cabinet minister, had no doubts. He wrote in the *Evening Standard* in October 1998: "When he (Portillo) was a junior minister of transport he was the chief architect of the ridiculously complicated, hideously expensive and largely unworkable scheme for the privatisation of the railways."

Although widely acknowledged as a top quality coffee, the Jamaican variety has been difficult to buy in the UK until now, says the chain's managing director, Geoffrey Holland.

The shop at 18 Maddox Street in London's Mayfair features Jamaican culture and lifestyle.

LORD SIMPSON, chief executive of GEC, was cock-a-hoop yesterday that an employee of the defence company has won the Young Woman Engineer of the Year Award for the second year running.

Lord Simpson took time off from merger talks with a host of other defence companies to praise this year's winner, Kim Dennis, 26, information technology specialist

group manager with Marconi Communications of Coventry. He said Ms Dennis and the other finalists "make wonderful role models for many youngsters who may not otherwise realise the superb and exciting career opportunities which are available to them in engineering."

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATES				
Country	Sterling	Dollar	1 month	3 month
UK	1.0000	2.6134	2.6112	2.6112
Australia	16.402	19.381	19.356	19.356
Austria	13.657	16.737	16.721	16.721
Belgium	36.880	56.737	56.521	56.521
Canada	2.231	10.305	10.296	10.296
Denmark	10.493	10.473	10.443	10.443
Euro	1.4038	1.4063	1.4008	1.4008
Finland	8.935	8.9326	8.9326	8.9326
France	6.563	8.245	8.222	8.186
Germany	2.965	2.7495	2.7491	2.7491
Greece	16.58	46.82	46.68	46.68
Hong Kong	12.78	12.785	12.829	12.745
Ireland	11.104	11.076	11.093	11.079
Italy	27.902	77.23	77.128	77.128
Japan	18.22	166.29	164.88	163.50
Malaysia	6.2763	6.165	6.099	6.099
Mexico	17.40	3.0993	3.0873	3.0836
Netherlands	3.1017	3.0453	3.0453	3.0453
New Zealand	3.0507	3.0482	3.0453	3.0453
Norway	13.657	8.2794	8.2794	8.2794
Portugal	20.47	20.47	20.47	20.47
Saudi Arabia	6.1954	6.1954	6.1954	6.1954
Singapore	2.7802	2.7724	2.7700	2.7700
South Africa	10.0455	10.152	10.346	10.346
Spain	234.60	234.02	233.12	232.00
Sweden	12.871	12.841	12.795	12.795
Switzerland	2.2408	2.2310	2.2158	2.2158
US	1.6493	1.6493	1.6493	1.6493

INTEREST RATES						
UK		Discount	5.25%	Repo/Ave		3.40%
Base	6.00%	Discount	5.25%	Repo/Ave		3.40%
European Central Bank		Discount	3.50%	Discount		0.50%
O/N Marginal 2.5%		US		Switzerland		
O/N Facility 2.75%		Prime	7.75%	Discount		1.00%
Repo	3.00%	Discount	5.50%	Lombard		3.25%
Canada		Fed Funds	4.94%			
Prime	6.75%					

BOND YIELDS										
Country	3mth	6m	1yr	2yr	5yr	10yr	15yr	ch		
Australia	4.67	0.01	4.60	-0.03	4.72	-0.12	4.89	-0.15	5.18	-0.11
Belgium	3.03	-0.03	2.97	-0.03	2.96	-0.06	3.24	-0.08	3.89	-0.11
Canada	4.60	-0.01	4.78	-0.08	4.70	-0.07	4.82	-0.05	4.98	-0.05
Euro	3.02	0.40	3.03	-0.03	3.08	-0.06	3.25	-0.07	3.71	-0.11
France	3.18	-0.01	2.95	0.00	2.99	-0.05	3.25	-0.06	3.80	-0.07
Germany	3.18	-0.01	3.10	-0.03	2.92	-0.05	3.18	-0.06	3.71	-0.06
Italy	3.02	0.40	3.03	-0.03	3.08	-0.06	3.36	-0.04	3.95	-0.02
Japan	0.28	0.02	0.38	-0.01	0.58	-0.03	1.17	-0.04	1.79	-0.03
N'tlands	3.18	-0.01	3.10	-0.03	3.01	-0.06	3.25	-0.06	3.83	-0.07
Spain	3.00	-0.02	2.90	0.00	3.02	-0.11	3.43	-0.03	3.98	0.01
Sweden	3.65	0.02	3.33	-0.03	3.42	-0.06	3.53	-0.08	4.03	-0.07
S'land	1.27	-0.09	1.52	-0.12	1.52	-0.11	1.90	-0.09	2.48	-0.06
UK	5.50	0.00	5.45	0.00	4.76	-0.03	4.38	-0.05	4.28	-0.08
US	4.30	...	4.24	...	4.53	...	4.53	...	4.71	...

BOND YIELDS

Henman talks up Open prospects

TENNIS

BY DERRICK WHYTE

TIM HENMAN is confident of his chances in next week's Australian Open, despite making a losing start to his preparations.

Henman was beaten 2-6, 6-4, 6-4 by Mark Philippoussis in his first match in Melbourne's Kooyong Classic, following a defeat in the Qatar Open final on Sunday to the German qualifier, Rainer Schuttler. But he believes he is playing consistently enough to challenge for the year's opening Grand Slam.

"I think my game since Wimbledon has been most consistent. I've beaten most people," the 24-year-old said, "but now that Pete Sampras has pulled out of the Open - he's one guy I haven't beaten - if I can continue playing the way I am then I will be difficult to beat."

Henman's best achievement in a Grand Slam to date was losing to Sampras in last year's Wimbledon semi-final. He has changed his routine this year after playing in the last two finals in Sydney.

"I would have arrived on Tuesday and played that day in Sydney and then gone and played five matches as I have done in the last two years, and that takes a lot out of you," Henman said.

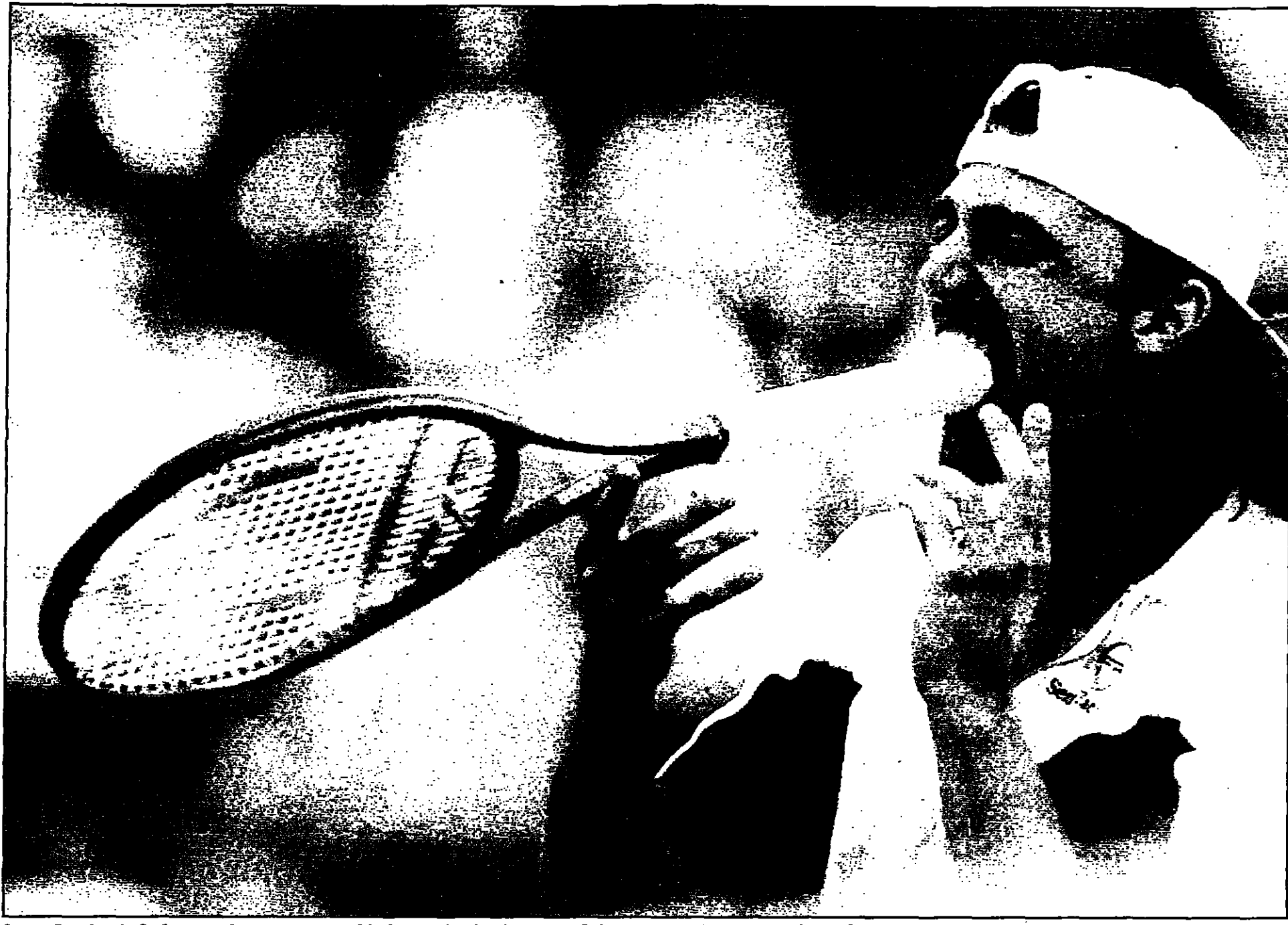
"To go into the Australian Open I would like to be a little fresher, so that was my reasoning in playing here before the Australian Open. I think playing in the last two Sydney finals is perhaps a little bit too much with regards to preparation for the Australian Open."

Henman could be top-seeded for the first time in an ATP Tour event in Britain next month. The British No 1 will take prime billing at the Guardian Direct Cup in Battersea Park, London, from 22 to 28 February, if he maintains or improves his present world ranking of seven.

Henman is the highest-ranked player to have confirmed his entry for the Battersea tournament.

Yevgeny Kafelnikov, the Russian holder who is ranked 11 in the world, and Karol Kucera, the Slovakian ranked eighth, both announced yesterday they too would be competing in the London event.

It means that five of the



Goran Ivanisevic finds a novel way to express his frustration in his 7-6, 7-6 defeat against Thomas Enqvist at the Kooyong Classic in Melbourne yesterday

Allsport

world's leading 11 players will be on view at Battersea since Greg Rusedski, the British No 2, who is ranked nine, and the former Wimbledon champion, Richard Krajicek, the Dutchman ranked 10, are also among the entries.

Henman's possible top seeding at Battersea is an indication of the remarkable progress he has made in the past 12 months. At the tournament last year, he was ranked 21 in the world and not among the eight seeds,

although he did beat Krajicek, then seeded fifth, in the first round before falling to Kafelnikov in three sets in the third.

Also in Australia is Steffi Graf, the former world No 1, who continued her comeback yesterday by beating the American Serena Williams to reach the quarter-finals of the Adidas International in Sydney.

Graf played only a handful of tournaments in 1998 because of a series of injuries, primarily wrist, ankle and knee prob-

lems, that prevented her from playing for most of 1997 as well. She missed last year's Australian Open through injury and has not won a Grand Slam title since the 1996 US Open.

However, she came back strongly late last year, and began this year ranked No 9 after winning two of the last three tournaments she entered and 12 of her previous 13 matches, including wins over the leading three players in the world. Graf continued that winning

form against Williams yesterday, weathering a second-set wobble and coming back from a break down in the final set, to beat the teenager 6-2, 3-6, 7-5 and reach the last eight of the Australian Open warm-up, where she will face Serena's older sister, Venus.

Venus Williams, ranked No 5, could prove Graf's toughest opponent in the lead-up to next week's Grand Slam tournament. She overpowered the South African player Amanda

Coetzer to earn a meeting with Graf.

Graf is understandably eager to improve on her recent progress. "It's been a while since I started a year without any injuries. It's a great feeling," the 29-year-old German said.

"The wrist and knee, it's all fine. It's a completely different way to approach the game. I'm able to work on my condition. That hasn't been the case for a long time."

Of yesterday's win over the

younger Williams sister, Graf said: "I played a very good first set, but I had a total letdown in the second. I started to make an extreme amount of mistakes. I felt very flat suddenly. But to come back was good. I'm happy I was able to raise my game at that point."

The Australian Open champion, Petr Korda, began legal proceedings yesterday challenging the right of the ITF to appeal against his lenient treatment for a positive drugs test.

Baynes makes move to Salford

RUGBY LEAGUE

THE WIGAN prop Neil Baynes has boosted his hopes of regular first-team action by joining Super League rivals Salford. Baynes has had few senior opportunities at Central Park, making just 12 substitute appearances in four years.

But the 21-year-old forward made a big impact for Wigan at Salford four months ago, scoring his first try for the club with his first touch of the ball after stepping off the bench.

Baynes, who has agreed a two-year deal with Salford, was one of five props chasing a first-team place at Wigan, with competition from Neil Cowie, Terry O'Connor, Tony Mesirov and the new signing Brett Goldspink.

The former Great Britain captain Garry Schofield, who made three Challenge Cup final appearances at the height of his career, could find himself leading Doncaster on the Wembley trail later this month. The 33-year-old former Hull, Leeds and Huddersfield stand-off has been targeted as the first of a number of major signings by the First Division club following a successful takeover.

Doncaster have been rescued by Westferry Ltd, the company that also recently took over the town's football team, and the directors yesterday submitted their business plan for approval by the Rugby Football League board.

Schofield, who was sacked as player-coach of Huddersfield last summer, is currently playing rugby union with Aberavon but is expected to lend his vast experience to reversing the ailing fortunes of Doncaster.

The Doncaster coach, Colin Maskill, is hoping to sign Schofield in time for the Challenge Cup tie against the Oldham amateur club, St Amos, on 31 January.

First Division Hull KR have completed their overseas quota with the signing of utility forward David Luckwell, who made 57 first-grade appearances with the Canterbury Bulldogs.

Botha wary of Tyson

BOXING

BY KIERAN DALEY

FRANCOIS BOTHA predicted yesterday that the world will see the old Mike Tyson again this weekend, when the pair meet in Las Vegas.

By "old", Botha was referring to the brutally intimidating Tyson who took boxing by storm when he became world champion at the age of 20.

However, while Tyson is an overwhelming favourite to beat the South African in his first fight since he was disqualified for biting Evander Holyfield in June 1997, Botha believes he can upset the odds.

Botha is 7-1 with the Las Vegas bookmakers to upset Tyson's comeback, but he is used to flying in the face of reason. In a freak accident at 16 he fell into a hole while gathering corn and mangled his right arm. Nerve damage was so severe that he still does not enjoy full feeling in the limb. His little finger does not fully close and for years he boxed mainly with his left arm.

He missed the Olympics

when South Africa was barred because of apartheid and has warred with the boxing authorities throughout his career. When he became International Boxing Federation heavyweight champion in 1995 he was stripped of his title a few weeks later after testing positive for steroids which a doctor had prescribed for an injury.

"All of a sudden he has lost all his money," Botha said of Tyson. "He wants something again. That might make him more angry than he was in the past. It might make him come out harder to get it back again."

"I think Mike Tyson is the best heavyweight out there," said the South African. "I want to fight the best. If you beat the best, you are the best."

He admitted that he can not get the intimidating vision of Tyson, coming at him from the first bell, out of his mind.

"Tyson's rushing up trying to catch me," Botha said. "I've got to do my thing. I have to make the right moves. This guy's coming to take my head off in the first three rounds. He'll try to get it in the first. That round will be brutal, but I know I am going to get through it. If I do the fight is mine."

Henry Wharton insisted yesterday that he will have no regrets about retiring even though he had a triple title fight just three weeks away. He was to have challenged Crawford Ashley for the European, Commonwealth and British light-heavyweight titles on 6 February.

Wharton's retirement has surprised both Frank Maloney, his promoter, and his trainer Gary Atkin. Atkin said: "The strange thing is he's never been in better shape."

But the 31-year-old from York is convinced that he has chosen the right moment to retire. "I'm not prepared and I was never going to be prepared for the

Ashley fight," he said yesterday. "I don't feel I have the things that I once had in my career and I don't want to fight again. I will have no regrets. How many boxers do you know who have retired after a win? Everybody carries on too long."

Wharton's last fight was a non-title light-heavyweight bout with the Ukrainian Konstantin Okhray in York in September. Wharton accepts that after that contest, which ended in a bruising sixth-round victory, he should have immediately retired. "The doubts had been there for almost 12 months, but after the Okhray fight as soon as I left the ring I knew it," he said.

During Wharton's 31-fight career he held the British, Commonwealth and European super-middleweight titles, but lost his three career fights, all on points, in challenges for the world super-middleweight title. He was beaten by Nigel Benn and Chris Eubank in 1994, and Robin Reid three years later.

Jordan ready to enjoy family life

Engine swap has Pavey sweating

BASKETBALL

once the National Basketball Association lock-out ended.

"I thought about saying just two words, 'I'm gone', but I thought I owed my fans a lot more than that," he said, with his wife, Juamita, at his side. "My life will take a change." He added he looked forward to being a parent and would "live vicariously through my kids," whether or not they played basketball. Jordan, asked if he would definitely never return, said: "I never say never." But he added: "I'm very secure in my decision."

Manchester Giants have resigned Kevin St Kitts in time to play in the Budweiser League top-of-the-table clash against Sheffield Sharks on Saturday. He replaces Danny Craven, who will miss the rest of the season because of injury.

THE MORE difficult the Dakar Rally becomes the more Simon Pavey enjoys it. Just two kilometres into the 340-mile 11th stage to Nema, the engine of his British-made CCM motorbike gave a death rattle and seized.

"I eventually got a lift back to the bivouac with some American missionaries, found the spare engine after a struggle, then hired a pick-up to take me back to the bike," said Pavey, who proved his worth in last year's rally by finishing the leading non-factory supported rider.

Working in baking heat in six inches of soft sand, it took him six hours to swap engines with the help of a Tuareg boy named Jobe. "The exhaust was held on by a spare throttle cable," Pavey said, "but we got it going. My worry then was would the fuel truck still be there?"

By a fluke, it was. After that, "it was just 186 miles of empty

RALLYING

BY MAC MCDIARMID in Nema, Mauritania

desert, at night, with the bike falling to bits underneath me."

Pavey arrived at Nema at 2:30am exhausted but curiously fulfilled. Ahead lay the notoriously punishing 304-mile 12th stage to the beautiful Saharan oasis of Tichit. It would almost certainly be hell and, just as certainly, Pavey, despite being well behind the leaders, was expecting to love every minute.

The Frenchman Richard Sainct (BMW) is the overall leader with a total time of 45hr 4min 17sec. The highest placed Briton is the KTM-riding John Deacon, who is two and a half hours behind Sainct in eighth position. The rally ends on Sunday in Saint-Louis.

Results, Digest, page 27

Giant leap for Smith's peace of mind

Britain's foremost high jumper has just made his first attempt in six months to clear the bar - he failed but is delighted. By Mike Rowbottom

SHORTLY BEFORE three o'clock yesterday afternoon in the empty, echoing vastness of Birmingham's National Indoor Arena, Steve Smith failed to clear 2.10 metres in the high jump. He could not have been happier.

Just over five months earlier, a freak training accident had left Britain's Olympic bronze medalist unable to move his head or neck. This was his first effort over a bar since then - one small jump for Steve Smith, one giant leap for his mind. As he approached his take-off with a full run-up, the only sound was the crescendo of his footsteps followed by a clanging and clattering as he sent both the bar and one of the supports flying. He lay still for a moment on the landing bed before flipping himself upright with the panache that has become his trademark in a seven-year international career. Three more jumps, the last of them at 2.20m, reinforced the message: he was back in business.

"There was a real sense of relief," he said. "I felt like a high jumper again. This was my first jump for almost six months and I was using a new run-up for the first time, so the whole thing felt very weird. But after this I know I can be very, very competitive again this season."

The details of the accident on 7 July remain horribly clear to him. It happened in an ordinary jump at the Waverley track in his native city of Liverpool, two days before he was due to compete in the Oslo Grand Prix. "As soon as I landed on my back it was really painful," he said. "I couldn't move off the landing bed. But I thought that maybe it was just a matter of having to click something back into place. I hadn't ruled out Oslo."

Twenty minutes later, still prostrate and with paramedics stabilising his neck, he had ruled out Oslo - but was still thinking in terms of a month or two out of action. It was not until the following morning as he lay in a surgical collar at the Royal Liverpool Hospital, that the severity of his position sank in. "They had to give me morphine for the pain," he said. "I was so sleepy that my consultant



Jump of joy: Steve Smith back in business in Birmingham's National Indoor Arena yesterday after recovering from a disabling injury that threatened his athletics career

David Ashdown

had to wake me up to give me a diagnosis. He spouted all this jargon, and then disappeared.

"Malcolm Brown, the British team doctor, was with me at the time, so I said to him, 'What does all that mean?' And he told me I would not be jumping for the rest of the year at least. I was just devastated."

In one alarming incident he had been turned from an athlete who stood at the top of the world rankings to an anxious 25-year-old wondering if he would ever be an athlete again.

Smith was in hospital for 10 days, but spent longer worrying over a succession of diagnoses. At first, it was

thought he had torn into-spinous ligaments and suffered a prolapsed disk. A second opinion presented a different picture: no ligament tear, and a disk which may have been

His mind was taken off his own predicament in August, when he travelled to the European Championships as non-playing British team captain. But the frustrations arose

10 minutes to realise that he could not face following the Games on television. "I thought to myself, 'You don't want to be watching this'," he said. By this time, however, he had

rector of jumps for PAS, the Lottery-distributing body for British athletics. Bidder, who worked for most of the 1990s coaching in the Australian Institute of Sport, started Smith's rehabilitation programme, backed up by frequent physiotherapy.

A couple of months ago many of Smith's lingering concerns over his condition were allayed by another member of the AIS, Peter Stanton, who was in England to advise UK Athletics 98 on a physiotherapy programme. Stanton told Smith he had rotated his vertebrae in the accident - three had turned one way, two the other. Smith's team of physios are

now concentrating on keeping them all in line.

Smith will return to the same Birmingham arena at the end of this month for the AAA's indoor championships, before turning his thoughts to the World Indoor and outdoor championships later this year. But the real goal lies beyond.

"I am dedicating myself 100 per cent to doing well at the 2000 Olympics," he said. "I want to be in Sydney having done everything I possibly could to give myself a chance of winning."

Yesterday marked a significant step towards that ambition.

'I am dedicating myself 100 per cent to doing well at the 2000 Olympics. I want to be in Sydney having done everything possible to give myself the chance of winning'

prolapsed before the accident.

"It was a really confusing time," Smith said. "I kept thinking: If it's not clear what happened, what was to stop it happening again in the same way?"

again the following month as English athletes, including his main domestic rival Dalton Grant, swept up the titles at the Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur. It took Smith about

decided to draw a metaphorical line underneath the events of the summer. He left Liverpool to live and train in Birmingham under the guidance of Tudor Bidder, the technical di-

No sanctions on Salt Lake City

THE International Olympic Committee has ruled out imposing any sanctions against Salt Lake City officials in connection with the Olympic Games' biggest corruption scandal, an IOC investigator said yesterday.

"The commission will not recommend any action against Salt Lake City," said Jacques Rogge, a member of the IOC panel investigating allegations of bribery in the city's winning bid for the 2002 Winter Games. "There is no action to be taken."

Rogge, meanwhile, confirmed that up to 12 IOC members have been implicated in the inquiry but rejected calls for the IOC president, Juan Antonio Samaranch, to resign as "ridiculous". He also said the IOC was prepared to investigate charges of corruption in other host city election campaigns, including claims that Sydney officials were approached for bribes during their successful bid for the 2000 Summer Games.

Rogge, a Belgian member of the IOC's executive board, said the six-man investigative panel had considered sanctions against Salt Lake City officials connected with the 2002 bid. However, he said the possibility was ruled out after the Salt Lake organising committee's leading two

OLYMPIC GAMES

officials, president Frank Jolkik and vice president Dave Johnson, resigned last week. "The people who were in the bid are no more," Rogge said. "They took the actions they thought were needed."

The head of the bid committee, Tom Welch, is also no longer associated with the Games. He resigned as president of the organising committee last year after being charged in a separate, private matter. "The only action we could have discussed was against the people in the bid committee who were still on the organising committee," Rogge said. "As they have resigned, there is definitely no need for action. This does not imply any judgement on their behaviour at this stage."

Rogge said he understood that "around a dozen" IOC members had been implicated in the Salt Lake investigation. Letters were sent to those members this week demanding an explanation.

The IOC panel meets on 23 January in Lausanne, Switzerland, to conclude its findings, and will make recommendations to the full executive board the following day.

Samaranch has said that any members found guilty of corruption will be removed.

ON TOP OF THE WORLD

Down Under, Ben Ainslie won the World Laser Championship in considerable style at Port Phillip Bay yesterday. The 1996 Olympic silver medalist could have afforded to sit out from the last of the 12-race series, leaving the Atlanta Games gold medalist and the man he has beaten four times since then, the Brazilian Robert Scheidt, and Sweden's Karl Sunesson to fight it out for second and third.

But he chose to sail that final race "because the waves were getting quite steep and the wind was picking up, and I thought it would be a bit of a blast. It was good to be out there racing." He capsized a few times and finished a lowly 18th, but it was typical of a man who seemingly has an insatiable appetite for competition.

The 21-year-old, now based in Lynton and who celebrates his 22nd birthday on the fifth of next month, needed only fourth place in the 11th race of the series to win on a comeback. Third gave him the world title outright. Despite being 15th at the end of the first leg, sailed in a south-westerly gusting over 20 knots, he soon pulled up to the vital fourth place.

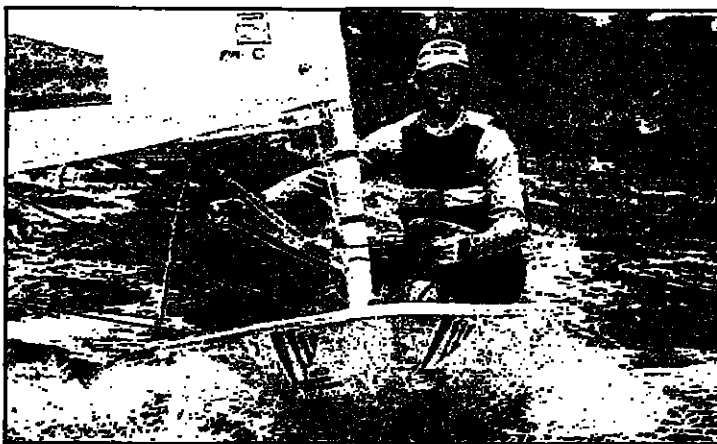
Ainslie was working the short, steep waves to good effect, his fitness programme paying dividends and two months of training in Australia being rewarded. So, for good mea-

SAILING

BY STUART ALEXANDER
in Melbourne

sure, he overtook the American Mark Mendelblatt on the last leg to finish third behind Scheidt and Sunesson, and he knew the game was his.

It was only in 1995 that Ainslie was winning gold in the World Youth Championship. A year later he was wearing Olympic silver, but in both the 1996 and 1997 Laser World Championships, in Cape Town and Chile respectively, he was third. Last year he won the world single-



Ben Ainslie is all smiles during yesterday's final race. Allsport

hander championship, sailed in Lasers, beating Robert Scheidt in Dubai. He went on to win the European Championship in Portugal and was voted the World Sailor of the Year by the sport's governing body, the International Sailing Federation.

He now takes a bit of a rest, but may appear at some regattas in New Zealand, an invitational in Dubai, before looking forward - with perhaps a try at the two-handed Star keelboat along the way - to the pre-Olympic regatta at Sydney in September. But he still has to go through the UK trial system at the beginning of next year to earn his place to represent Britain at the Games. And he

is well aware that Britain has strength in depth in the Laser class, Andrew Simpson's fifth place in Melbourne giving them two in the top six.

Taking time out from the adjacent race course to congratulate Ainslie was the Soling skipper, Andy Beadsworth. An 11th in the first race of the day was enough to maintain his sixth position overall. But, with the Australian Cameron Miles scoring two wins, Beadsworth slipped to seventh at the end of the day.

Iain Percy remains fourth overall in the Finn Gold Cup, and Britain's other top single-handed, Shirley Robertson, had a worst-so-far ninth in the opening race in the Europe, but third place in the second race also kept her fourth overall.

Four British crews have made it through to the 25-strong finals of the 49er Skiff World Championship, which starts its 11-race series today. They are Andy and Ian Budgen, Tim Robinson and Ian Walker, Paul Brotherton and Neal McDonald, and the current national champion, Ian Barker, partnered with the Australian Daniel Phillips.

Britain is also the current leader of the competition for the International Olympic Committee Cup, presented by its president, Juan Antonio Samaranch, for the top-scoring nation in the seven Olympic-class World Championships.

Prutour proves a big draw

THE PRUTOUR in May will be shorter by two days than the inaugural nine-day race last year, but it will be tougher than ever, the organisers warned when the route was unveiled in London yesterday.

With around £100,000 in prize money on offer, the Prutour claims to be the world's fourth-richest race, and the itinerary ensures that the riders will earn every penny. The 1,178-kilometre (733-mile) race has been upgraded by the world governing body, the Union Cycliste Internationale, who have also increased its allocation of world ranking points. Under UCI rules the duration has had to be reduced to seven days because of the Prutour's enhanced status, but it should draw class opposition from Europe, making the racing harder.

CYCLING

BY ROBIN NICHOLL

Three of the 18-team places have been filled already by high-quality squads. Chris Boardman and his Australian team-mate, Stuart O'Grady, who were respectively second and first last year, return with their French team Credit Agricole.

US Postal Service, whose riders include Lance Armstrong, who recently won his fight against cancer, will be out to improve on their team victory last May.

With the inclusion of the Dutch team Rabobank, the challenge to any British hopes could be awesome, given the European racers' more intensive programme.

The Prutour opens with a race around the Thames Embankment and Whitehall on 28 May, and ends with another circuit race in Princes Street, Edinburgh, on 29 May.

In between lies some exacting racing, with the Bristol to Swansea leg on day four described by the race director, Alan Rushton, as "the hardest we have ever had. This will be one of the toughest races ever held in this country."

On British hopes for success, Boardman said: "Despite the overall strength in depth of this year's race, we will come with the same approach as last year."

1998 PRUTOUR SCHEDULE: 25 May Westminster circuit race; 24 May Medway to Portsmouth and Portsmouth time-trial; 25 May Winchester to Bristol; 26 May Bristol to Swansea; 27 May Swansea to Birmingham; 28 May Liverpool-Blackpool; 29 May Carlisle to Edinburgh and Edinburgh circuit race.

Maier to race despite injury

THE DOUBLE Olympic champion Hermann Maier will ignore a back injury in order to compete at Wengen and Kitzbühel, the two toughest downhill events on the Alpine circuit.

The Austrian had been hoping to take a break from the World Cup to rest his back before next month's World Championships in Vall, but yesterday said he had decided to carry on in order to protect his lead in the overall standings.

"The back is not so good but not so bad either... we're working on it," Maier, who won a shortened downhill in Wengen last year, said. "I'm racing Wengen for sure and Kitzbühel next weekend if it does not get worse."

"Normally it would be better to rest but I'm in pretty good shape, except for my back."

SKIING

Maier said that he will also race two slaloms, a discipline he usually avoids, to collect combined points.

The Norwegian all-rounder Kjetil Andre Aamodt, the 1994 overall champion and Maier's closest rival, is 228 points behind the Austrian in the overall standings, but could easily close the gap over the coming week if Maier were not to compete.

Maier now plans to be in the start but for every race leading up to the World Championships, including the two slalom events, starting with the demanding Lauberhorn downhill on Saturday. With pain-killers and muscle relaxants already a regular part of Maier's pre-race preparations, the reigning World Cup cham-

pion is also resorting to more traditional Austrian remedies. He has been undergoing massages several times a day and having therapy with hot sands applied to the back.

Maier has won six races this season, including a giant slalom victory in Adelboden on Tuesday. But with Saturday's downhill and Sunday's slalom making up the season's first combined event, Maier is well aware that Aamodt, who is equally skilled in both the speed and technical events, could erase his advantage almost overnight.

Maier, whose aggressive style more suited to the downhill and super-giant slalom, rarely competes in slalom but was still good enough to win last year's combined in Wengen.

Brave Jim Peters dies at 80

THE MARATHON legend Jim Peters, who caught the imagination of the public at the 1954 Empire Games in Canada when he staggered round the last lap, has died aged 80.

"Jim was a class runner when marathon running, unlike today, was unfashionable," said David Bedford, the international race director of the London Marathon and a former 10,000 metres world record holder. "He trained harder than most - often 100 miles a week - and believed in the work ethic with his thousands of miles run in plimsols. My first memories of him were from newspaper pictures showing him collapsing when in sight of the finish. Few athletes push themselves to such exhaustion."

Peters entered the Vancouver stadium around three miles ahead of his rivals but dehydration had taken its toll. He fell six times and his English team-mates at trackside could not help for fear that he would be disqualified. They were finally able to go to his aid when it was clear he was not going to cross the line. The race was won by the Scot, Joe McGhee, but Peters' efforts are fixed in the minds of millions who watched it on Moviezone News.

Peters, who had broken the world record four times previously, retired from athletics after the Games - "It cost me my killer instinct," he said. *Obituary, Review, page 7*

TOMORROW



RICHARD WILLIAMS
IN LAS VEGAS
SIN CITY CLEANS
UP ITS ACT

McKenzie slams 'whingeing' foreigners

Bath act to rectify crisis

RUGBY UNION

BY ANDREW BALDOCK

BATH YESTERDAY responded to their scrum-half injury crisis by signing Wasps' England international Andy Gomersall on loan.

Gomersall, who won the last of his six caps against Argentina in 1997, will be available for Bath until 13 February, and is likely to be a replacement when Newcastle visit the Recreation Ground this weekend. Gomersall, 24, has struggled to pin down a regular Wasps first-team place this season, fighting a three-way battle alongside Mike Friday and Martyn Wood, while fading completely from the England picture.

Bath will welcome his arrival after seeing their promising young Welsh prospect Gareth Cooper join the casualty list. Cooper suffered a fractured eye socket during the Tetley's Bitter Cup fourth round defeat by Newcastle last Saturday, and now faces a four-week lay-off. Already on the sidelines are the Scottish international Andy Nicol, out for another month because of cruciate knee ligament damage, and the New Zealander Jon Preston (Achilles tendon), leaving the South African Steve Hatley as Bath's only fit scrum-half.

The ailing European champions have lost seven of their last eight league and cup matches, and all hopes of domestic silverware will disappear for a third successive season unless they can somehow turn around an erratic Premiership campaign.

Fran Cotton is back in conflict with the Rugby Football Union - this time over the proposed slimming-down of the administrative structure of the sport in England. The Lions manager and former England captain resigned as vice-chairman of the Management Board last April in protest at RFU policy. Now the new look Union has come in for an ear-bashing from Cotton as The Reform Group, of which he is president, rejected the RFU's working party report on counties and the future of the Council and Management Board. "This document is dangerous," said Cotton. "As the report stands, it further removes democracy from the membership."

The report, prepared by RFU vice-president and ex-England captain Budge Rogers, will recommend to a special meeting in March that administration below Twickenham headquarters level should be carried out by strengthening the constituent bodies (basically the 27 counties) who, as the RFU Council, would be responsible for policy.

THE FORMER Everton and Leeds United forward Duncan McKenzie has spoken out against "moaning" foreign players who earn a living in Britain. McKenzie himself has experienced playing in a foreign country, having spent a year in Belgium with Anderlecht in 1976, prior to his transfer to Everton in December of the same year. But he admits to being "staggered" that overseas players over here are complaining about conditions at their clubs.

FOOTBALL

Pierre van Hooijdonk has been on strike at Nottingham Forest, Paolo Di Canio refused to return to Sheffield Wednesday because of "stress" and "depression" and the Blackburn midfielder Sebastian Perez has said he wants to return to France because the cold weather is affecting his daughter's health.

But McKenzie feels that players should rise above such complaints and has sided with

Paul Gascoigne, who claimed on Saturday that he did not like the idea of foreign players saying they needed rest.

"It's all rubbish," McKenzie said. "This goes back to the days of Mirandinha at Newcastle. There have always been problems and you end up with some managers becoming xenophobic and not wanting any foreigners at all."

"Scandinavians are the one option because they are very similar to us anyway. "The foreign players are

much more business-minded than [the British], but they seem to whinge an awful lot about the people who pay them."

"It staggers me the number of people who are playing and taking fortunes out of England, but are also saying everything about the place is wrong. "I wouldn't have dreamed of living in Belgium and telling the Belgians and the people of Brussels that it wasn't a very nice place - the Belgian people don't do this and don't do that. That's bang out of order."

McKenzie insists that he had no problems with local culture during his time in Belgium and says the foreign players he played with were made welcome by their team-mates and fans alike.

Furthermore, he also believes the success Chelsea are currently enjoying can be attributed directly to their foreign players integrating well into the English community.

"Oswaldo Ardiles, Ricky Villa, Frans Thijssen and Arnold Muhren all came over here

and loved it - so much so that Ossie still has a home in London," McKenzie said.

"He is still a member of a golf club in Ware. Can you believe that? Golf is such a typical English game. George Graham is a member there as well."

"I believe the Chelsea lads also love the country because they have discovered golf, and the biggest problem Gianluca Vialli has had is keeping them off the golf course."

But McKenzie appreciates

that the success at Stamford Bridge is not mirrored around the country, where many clubs, like Middlesbrough, have struggled with foreign signings.

"One of the problems is down to Italians and Brazilians and their Latin temperament. If things aren't going their way they want their ball back," he said.

"I would urge our clubs to keep away from too many foreign signings, but they are cheaper than ours. It's the chicken and the egg situation, isn't it?"

Problems mount for Atkinson

NO SOONER has Ron Atkinson begun the struggle to keep Nottingham Forest in the Premiership than the problems began to pile up for him. The long-serving Forest goalkeeper Mark Crossley, frustrated by his lack of first-team opportunities in the past 18 months, gave Atkinson an ultimatum yesterday. The 29-year-old has been unable to dislodge Dave Beasant from the side and has warned that, if he does not figure in the Premiership soon, he will ask to leave.

"I've got 18 months left on my contract," Crossley said. "At my age, it's no use playing reserve-team football."

Another problem for Atkinson is the doubt cast over his Elm bid for Carlton Palmer because of a wages wrangle. The Southampton midfielder has been lined up as the new manager's first signing, but the player and Forest have so far been unable to strike a deal.

"I can understand Forest's position, in a way," Palmer said. "They seem to be caught between two stools - between really going for it to avoid relegation and budgeting for next year in case they do go down. But I'm certainly not holding them to ransom."

Juninho has ruled out the possibility of an immediate move to Aston Villa. The Brazilian international has been linked with a £12m move back to England, with Villa Park rated as the likely destination. However, the former Middlesbrough man has decided to try to establish himself in Spain, even though his career has not flourished since his move to Atletico Madrid in July 1997.

"It is very difficult when you are not in the team," Juninho said. "But I would prefer to fight

BY TOMMY STANFORTH

and work and get back into the team and be a success in Spain rather than look for a move elsewhere."

Leeds have taken the Slovenian defender Aleksander Knave on a week's trial from the Austrian club, Tirol Innsbruck. However, the 26-year-old may have played insufficient international football for his country to earn a work permit.

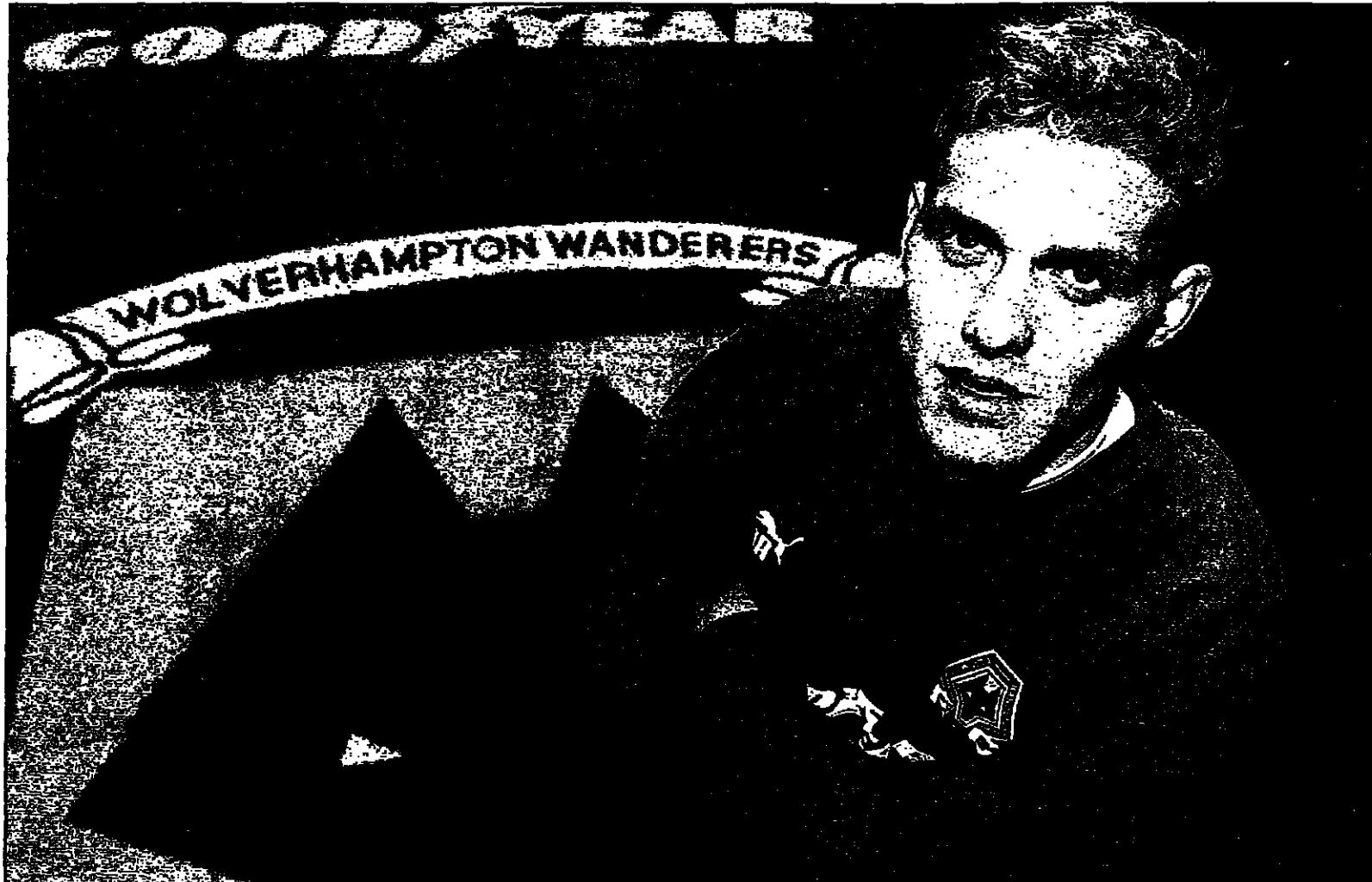
Wolves have completed the signing of the Norwegian World Cup striker Haavard Flo from the German Bundesliga club, Werder Bremen, for around £750,000.

The Everton manager, Walter Smith, is offering Graham Stuart a chance to return to Goodison Park. Smith is trying to sign the Sheffield United forward in exchange for the centre-half Craig Short, who is a surplus to requirements.

Gordon Taylor, the Professional Footballers' Association chief executive, was last night deciding whether to return to the Football Task Force - despite the fact that he has not been invited back by its chairman, David Mellor.

Taylor resigned last week after criticising Mellor for remarks the former Tory MP had made about players and the PFA. "Certain individuals on the Task Force have asked me to think about [returning]. I've appreciated them, together with some consideration, to give them my colleagues at the PFA."

Rangers will play a practice match against the United States national team at their winter training camp in Orlando, Florida, today. They will then meet the Brazilian side, Atletico Mineiro, on Sunday at the Orange Bowl in Miami.



Norwegian Wolf: Haavard Flo, the latest overseas signing at Wolverhampton Wanderers, arrives at Molineux yesterday. Action Images

Stott lobbies for FA chairmanship

AS THE debate continues over who will become the new Football Association chairman, Ian Stott believes he could be the compromise candidate.

The former Oldham Athletic chairman believes he may have the "middle-of-the-road" appeal to win confidence in all camps. Stott, who this week resigned as chairman of the Latics, has become a career football administrator after selling up his business empire, which included interests in holiday homes and night-clubs.

After almost 14 years as a councillor in the corridors of power at the FA, Stott knows a bit about survival and appeasement. He wants change at the FA, he wants it streamlined, but he still wants to retain its traditions. His 17 years as chairman of Oldham, in which

he oversaw their rise to the Premiership under Joe Royle's management, has earned him friends and admirers at every level of the game.

However, Stott stood down as Oldham's chairman on Monday. He is now vice-chairman at Briardley Park under David Brindley, following an uproar over reports that Stott was behind a proposed merger of Oldham, Rochdale and Bury.

Stott said that comments he had made had been taken out of context and he had no option but to resign. That decision leaves him with more time to lobby for the top FA post.

Stott said: "Now is the time to attack the situation at the FA. I would like to think that I would appeal to all sides. Now is the time for discussion. "I don't want this to look like

a full-blown election campaign. I'm not going flat out to be chairman, but I am certainly looking to become more involved at that level."

The 64-year-old, whose family used to be mill owners around Oldham, said: "I am interested in a position on the FA that would give me more involvement, but what that is at the moment I am not sure."

Stott does not have the outspoken approach of another candidate, Ken Bates, but he would want change. He said: "Maybe now is the right time to address the situation again."

Following Keith Wiseman's protracted departure, Stott has begun to put himself forward as a candidate for the middle ground. He said: "There was a time when it looked like there would be an immediate election

to find a new chairman, but that won't happen now until the summer, so there is no great urgency on that front at the moment. It will now be in June and that gives everyone a lot more time for discussion."

"There are obvious candidates, Geoff Thompson, who is now in charge, and David Sheepshanks, who I know well from the Football League, but he has only been an FA councillor for a year or so."

"Of course, the chairman is elected every year, which I have always felt is a bit daft. It also means it is hard to get rid of someone mid-term."

Stott, who lives in the Cheshire stockbroker belt in Wilmslow, knows all about trying and failing to achieve change within the FA. He said: "Ten years ago I was involved

in submitting plans for restructuring, and I recall walking out of the meeting in Plymouth because of the pettiness and arguing."

"We were looking to cut the number of councillors, to have a board of directors drawn from the committees who would have the power to decide things, and to have an age limit as well. There are things we should be addressing again, there must be change but you must always be wary of hurting peoples' feelings. You are asking people to vote away their positions, but these things have to be looked at."

"I'm looking for a happy medium, the middle ground. But we have to be able to speed up decision-making and have an elected body of, say, eight people on a board to run things."

Prince's 147 break wasted

SNOOKER

JASON PRINCE has found century breaks hard to come by throughout his career but made spectacular amends with a 147 at Blackpool yesterday. However, the maximum break was not enough to prevent the world No 39 suffering his ninth defeat in 10 matches this season. He lost 5-4 to Liverpool's Ian Brumby in the final qualifying round of the British Open in Blackpool.

Prince, who has recorded just 12 centuries in nine years as a professional, became the fifth player to compile a 147 and lose the match.

Brumby led 4-1 when Prince, from Yorkshire, who will be part of the Northern Ireland team at next week's Nations Cup in Newcastle, produced his break - the 25th maximum in the history of pro competition.

Prince's trickiest moment was the 14th red where he was forced to bridge awkwardly over the yellow. "That was probably the most important shot," he said. Full of confidence, Prince continued his comeback and claimed the next two frames before Brumby won the deciding with a 68 break.

"I would definitely trade the 147 for a win. I've really got mixed feelings because although I'm obviously proud of the break I need ranking points a lot more at the moment," Prince said.

BOWLS

WORLD BOULDER SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIP (Hemel Hempstead, Norfolk). First round: R. Wale (Wals) beat D. Le Marquand (Wals) 7-2; D. Le Marquand (Wals) beat N. Smith (Wals) 7-1; N. Smith (Wals) beat J. Bond (Eng) 7-1; J. Bond (Eng) beat J. Anderson (Wals) 7-2; J. Anderson (Wals) beat W. Wood (Wals) 7-4; W. Wood (Wals) beat J. Bond (Eng) 7-1.

CYCLING

Richard Virenque, who announced his retirement following the Tour de France last year, will race for the Italian team Polti in the upcoming season. Virenque was the top rider of the Festina team thrown out of the Tour for allegedly using banned substances. The 29-year-old Frenchman has denied to have knowingly taken banned substances.

FOOTBALL

NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE. Relegated fixtures: 9 Feb: Hartlepool v Carlisle (from 10 Nov); 23 Feb: Preston v Lincoln (from 2 Jan); 26 Dec: Preston v Lincoln (from 2 Jan); 2 Mar: Darlington v Exeter (from 24 Oct).

AUTO WINDSCREENS SHIELD

Relegated fixtures: 19 Jan: Hartlepool v Preston; Rochdale v Stoke; Swindon v Carlisle; Wigan v Scarborough (all from 12 Jan).

TODAY'S NUMBER

136

The number of decibels achieved by Leicester supporters against Chelsea - making them the loudest fans in the Premiership this season. In second place are Leeds (133) and Arsenal (132).

ICE HOCKEY

NHL: Tampa Bay 3 Toronto 4; Detroit 5 Montreal 1; Colorado 4 Chicago 1; Edmonton 2 Dallas 2 (all).

RALLYING

DAKAR RALLY 12th stage (Nema to Tiki, Mauritania). Cars: 1 J. L. Schlesier (Fr) Skoda 7hr 5min 23sec; 2 J. M. Servia (Sp) Skoda 3min 55sec behind; 3 R. Schinzel (Japan) Mitsubishi +7:29; 4 M. Prieto (Sp) Mitsubishi +11:30; 5 T. De Lavergne (Fr) Nissan +4:50:17; 6 M. Masuko (Japan) Mitsubishi +5:12; 7 J. Kiehlmeier (Ger) Mitsubishi +5:28:39; 8 M. Servia (Sp) Nissan +5:00:02; 9 G. Marcy (Bel) Nissan +5:42:35; 10 G. De Mevius (Bel) Nissan +5:55:33; Overall: 1 Schlesier 55hr 27min 34sec; 2 Prieto 20min 27sec behind; 3 R. Schinzel +1:1hr 31min 40sec; 4 Schinzel +2:10:42; 5 J. M. Servia +3:28:39; 6 Masuko +4:03:40; 7 Servia +4:50:17; 8 De Lavergne +5:41:40; 9 De Mevius +1:02:20; 10 Servia 10:35:56; Motorcycle: 1 R. Schinzel (Fr) BMW 36min 11sec; 2 F. Meoni (It) KTM 1min 44sec behind; 3 T. Magnaldi (Fr) KTM +2:40; 4 G. Sala (It) KTM +4:28; 5 K. Taitien (Fin) KTM +4:43; 6 A. Cox (SA) KTM +5:46; 7 J. Arcarons (Sp) KTM +10:56; 8 O. Gallardo (Sp) BMW +11:29; 9 J. Pupo (Sp) KTM +24:15; 10 J. Brucy (Fr) BMW +30:39; Overall: 1 Schinzel 45hr 4min 17sec; 2 Magnaldi 4:41 behind; 3 Meoni +1:07:57; 4 Cox +2:46:58; 5 Taitien +1:08:01; 6 Arcarons +1:12:43; 7 C. Sotelo (Sp) Yamaha +1:42:10; 8

J. Deacon (GB) KTM +2:30:49; 9 Sala +3:53:44; 10 C. De Gavarro (Chile) KTM +4:31:12.

RUGBY LEAGUE

Howard Morris was yesterday named as the new St. Helens chairman after Tom Ellard stood down for health reasons. Ellard, who is staying on the board, took over as chairman from Eric Ashton just over a year ago.

RUGBY UNION

Leicester have brought forward the kick-off time to 2.30pm for their next two home matches against London Scottish on Saturday and Gloucester a week later in an attempt to beat crowd and traffic problems with Leicester City who are also at home.

POSTPONED: Welsh Challenge Trophy Pool A: Cardiff v Edinburgh; Pool B: Bridgend v Glasgow; Pool C: Aberystwyth v Glasgow; Pool D: Aberystwyth v Glasgow.

TUESDAY'S LATE RESULTS: Swalec Cup Fourth round: Group B: Cross Keys 25 Durnham 14; Group L: Llandovery 22 Cardiff 40. Welsh Challenge Trophy Pool A: Neath 18 Abertawe 36.

SAILING

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (Melbourne). Seventh day: President of the IOC Cup 1 GB 30pts; 2 Aus 32; 3 Swe 27; Laser: Gold fleet overall (all 12 races, 1 discarded): 1 B. Anile 34pts; 2 R. Schinzel (Fr) 33; 3 K. Sureson (Swe) 32pts; 4 G. S. Simpson 31pts; 5 M. S. Simpson 30pts; 6 E. Wright 24; 7 A. Taylor 30; 8 P. Goodson 24; 9 Europe (after 6 races, 1 discarded): 1 S. Muller (Fr) 30pts; 2 M. Mathiasen (Den) 29; 3 A. M. S. M. 12; 4 S. A. Robertson 13; 5 D. W. W. 12; 6 S. A. Robertson 13; 7 A. D. W. 12; 8 S. A. Robertson 13; 9 S. A. Robertson 13; 10 S. A. Robertson 13; 11 S. A. Robertson 13; 12 S. A. Robertson 13; 13 S. A. Robertson 13; 14 S. A. Robertson 13; 15 S. A. Robertson 13; 16 S. A. Robertson 13; 17 S. A. Robertson 13; 18 S. A. Robertson 13; 19 S. A. Robertson 13; 20 S. A. Robertson 13; 21 S. A. Robertson 13; 22 S. A. Robertson 13; 23 S. A. Robertson 13; 24 S. A. Robertson 13; 25 S. A. Robertson 13; 26 S. A. Robertson 13; 27 S. A. Robertson 13; 28 S. A. Robertson 13; 29 S. A. 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SPORT

SMITH'S RETURN TO THE BAR P26 • CRICKET'S ONE-DAY KNIGHT P25

Venables on his way out at Palace

TERRY VENABLES was on the verge of parting company with Crystal Palace last night after talks with his chairman, Mark Goldberg. If Venables goes, Palace are expected to offer the manager's position to Steve Coppell, who has filled the job on two previous occasions and is currently the club's director of football.

The imminent break with Venables is believed to be a direct result of Palace's worsening financial situation, although Goldberg has also expressed his unhappiness with the team's performances. Palace have played poorly in recent weeks and are now languishing in the bottom half of the First Division. Venables is expected to leave as soon as negotiations about a final severance payment are completed. The former England coach agreed a deal believed to be worth £750,000 a year when he accepted Goldberg's offer last June, shortly after the Palace owner took control of the club. The pay-off may now be the subject of some acrimonious debate as money is in short supply at Palace.

The club said in a statement last night: "Mark Goldberg is having discussions with Terry Venables at the present time. These discussions are as amicable as they can be. The situation will be resolved mutually and an official statement on the matter will be made within the next 48 hours."

Venables believes he has not been given sufficient resources to rebuild the club and said on Sunday that he was surprised by the timing of last week's sale of Paul Warhurst to Bolton for £200,000 (Warhurst played for Bolton against Palace in a 3-0 defeat for the London side on Sunday). He is also unhappy with the prospective sale of Matt Jansen, Palace's highly rated striker.

Jansen is likely to be sold within the next fortnight, for

FOOTBALL

BY NICK HARRIS
AND ALAN NIXON

around £5m, but it is understood that Newcastle, who had been favourites to secure his signature until now, may lose out to another Premiership side, possibly Aston Villa or Tottenham. Countering complaints about a lack of transfer funds, Goldberg has pointed out that Venables has brought in 13 players in his brief reign. However, despite the £1.5m purchase of two Chinamen, Fan Zhiyi and Sun Jihai, and the recruitment of Lee Bradbury



Coppell: May take control

(£1.5m from Manchester City), and Craig Moore and Gordon Patric (£200,000 and £200,000 from Rangers), Palace's results have not improved.

When Venables goes, his assistant Terry Fenwick looks certain to follow him. Goldberg is then expected to offer Fenwick's job to John Cartwright, who returned to Palace last year to run the club's football academy. Cartwright managed Palace's highly successful youth team of the late 1970s, when, ironically, Venables was first-team manager and Fenwick played in Cartwright's side.

Coppell has managed Palace twice before. His first spell

ended when he resigned following Palace's relegation from the Premiership in 1993. He returned briefly as technical director two years later and again when he replaced Dave Bassett following his departure for Nottingham Forest two years ago.

Coppell promptly led Palace to promotion, but was moved into his present role following a run of poor results in mid-season. Alfio Lombardo took over as caretaker player-manager but was unable to halt the slide towards relegation.

In the past Coppell has said that he regards himself as "a Palace man", but it remains to be seen whether he would step into the breach this time. He was unhappy with the way he was moved aside last year and may feel that he would have too much to lose if he became manager. Whoever takes charge could face the prospect of fighting a relegation battle and having to sell players.

Goldberg had difficulty raising the funds to complete his takeover of the club from Ron Noades last summer. Palace are understood to owe £1m to Noades, who is also owed a further £4.5m by Goldberg in loans - due to be repaid in June 2003 - arising from the deal. Goldberg and Noades yesterday agreed to help the club over their current financial difficulties.

Goldberg is also being sued by his solicitors, S J Berwin, for more than £400,000 in costs arising from his purchase of the club.

Goldberg is also in talks with Jim McAvoy, who took over as Palace's chief executive last October in an effort to sort out the club's various business difficulties. McAvoy said: "I make no pretence about my disquiet regarding the decisions he is currently making at the club. I expect to make a more detailed statement within the next 48 hours."



Terry Venables (left) and assistant Terry Fenwick during their last match in charge of Palace, Sunday's defeat by Bolton Harry McGuire

United make Roa top target

BY ALAN NIXON

MANCHESTER UNITED are to make a £6m move to sign the Argentinian international goalkeeper Carlos Roa to fill Peter Schmeichel's gloves.

United's manager, Alex Ferguson, has decided that the South American, whose form has been one of the principal factors behind Real Mallorca's unexpected challenge for the Spanish title, is the man for the job of replacing the Dane.

Ferguson was impressed with Roa in the World Cup finals, when he became a national hero for saving David Batty's penalty and putting

England out of the competition. United's scouts have been regular visitors to Mallorca's matches for the past couple of months since Schmeichel announced his retirement, and every report has been good.

Ferguson's brother Martin, the club's chief European scout, also saw Roa in top form as Mallorca beat Real Madrid last weekend to continue their challenge for the championship. Contact has now been made with Roa's agents and with the Spanish club about a

summer move for the 28-year-old goalkeeper.

Mallorca will not sell now - and United are willing to wait - as they have the chance of domestic honours and the European Cup-Winners' Cup, in which they are in the last eight along with Chelsea. However, a deal should go through in the summer. Roa would need to apply for a work permit, but as Argentina's regular No 1 that should be no problem.

Roa is big, brave and athletic. His age is ideal for a goalkeeper and he would play his peak years at Old Trafford. The only

drawback is that he speaks little English. News that he is United's choice might also boost Schmeichel. His form dipped so dramatically that Ferguson thought about signing a new goalkeeper sooner rather than later.

Schmeichel may be rested for United's trip to Leicester on Saturday. He returned to Old Trafford this week after his holiday in Barbados, and Ferguson has hinted that he may continue with his second-choice goalkeeper, Raimond van der Gouw, at Filbert Street.

Ferguson intends to check if

Schmeichel is physically and mentally right to return. The manager claimed after Sunday's victory over West Ham that the rest periods for his World Cup men were over, but he may allow the Dane another match off.

"We will wait and see," said Ferguson. "We will see how much Peter has enjoyed himself while he was away."

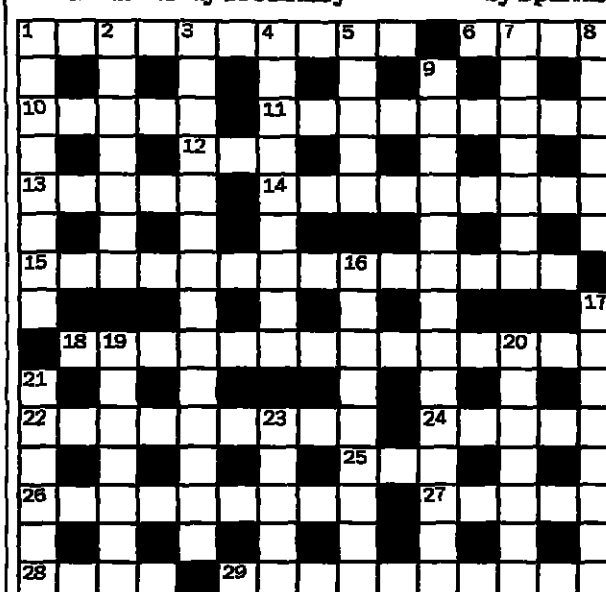
United have let their 21-year-old Norwegian striker Erik Nevland join the Swedish club, IFK Gothenburg, on loan for the Scandinavian summer season.

THE THURSDAY CROSSWORD

No. 3819 Thursday 14 January

by Spurius

Wednesday's solution



APARTHEID
SOUTH AFRICA
OCEANIC
PERMANENT
HIGWAY
JESSICA
COSI
KES
UNION
GREEN

item? Care needed (7)
Philosopher's work bearing fruit in Central American country? (8,8)
Abrasive agent appears upset when crossing central London (9)
Declare woman's taken off a little weight (5)
Beverage brewed in NE first (7)
Capital, a hot and dry one? (6)
They'll enclose a quotation, as a rule (8,6)
Act as arbitrator in plant, then give up (9)
Bones in knee, lots the worse for wear (8)
Compete, and succeed - good television (7)
Well-developed men fail to excite (7)
Agents importing primarily cinnamon, ginger and nutmeg? (6)
Volunteers to escort a soldier climbing in forest (5)

DOWN
Crash investigators finally gave opinion in a Court (8)
Sale starting with third

- ACROSS**
- Lambeth resident, shrewd man (10)
 - States monarch to be one guilty of exploitation (4)
 - Church vessel used for dairy product? (5)
 - Nobody's seen just after arriving at hospital department - it's in New York (9)
 - Total will be covered by a direct debit (3)
 - Condescend to be associated with new translation of Gide (5)
 - President embarrassed about function being stopped (9)
 - Not what you'd call private medicine? (3-11)
 - Old teamaker VIP car-
- DOWN**
- ried around to make drink (10,4)
 - Berry pest blighted elder (9)
 - Waste of water in Cornwall... (5)
 - ...pale blue water (3)
 - One reaction in a state of emotional distress is to find fault (9)
 - Satisfied article should be put in as intended (5)
 - Philosophical type is taking a long time (4)
 - Chinese, for instance, are behind France initially (3,7)

Germans are afraid of us, says Sir Bobby

BY ANDREW WARSHAW
in Cannes

SIR BOBBY CHARLTON last night accused his old adversary Franz Beckenbauer of trying to score political points in a bid to undermine England's bid to secure the vote to stage the 2006 World Cup.

Beckenbauer has once again raised the issue of the so-called "gentleman's agreement" in which England are alleged to have promised their support to Germany if, in return, that country backed the Euro 96 campaign. "He keeps going on about it and he should forget it," Sir Bobby said. "It's taken a lot of time arguing the case."

Speaking at the Football Expo trade fair in Cannes, Sir Bobby also declared that England's World Cup 2006 rivals were "afraid" of the English bid. "We have no divine right [to stage the tournament]," said Sir Bobby, "but what we have are safe grounds, no fences, and no major police presence."

Despite having staged Euro 96, he stressed, England had not hosted the world's premier football competition since 1966, when he and his team-mates won the tournament. "I hear things from our rivals, from Germany and South Africa, about why the World Cup should not come to England," said Sir Bobby. "But the one thing that is consistent is that every time a statement comes out from one of our competitors about the World Cup, they invariably mention England. Why is that? It is because they are afraid of us. They respect the strength of our bid for the things that we can offer."

Sir Geoff Hurst, the hat-trick hero of the 1966 World Cup

final and the English campaign team's other leading ambassador, welcomed the sale of Wembley stadium and said the rebuilding of it would be a key milestone in the campaign. "Wembley is one of the cornerstones of our very strong bid," Sir Geoff told an informal press conference. "The latest news is marvellous."

He also expressed complete confidence that the recent resignations of the Football Association chairman, Keith Wiseman, and the chief executive, Graham Kelly, would have no bearing whatsoever on the English bid. "The bid is not about one or two personalities," he said. "It's about a strong team making a bid for the country as a whole. I see it as a small bump on a long, tough road. We've almost forgotten about it already."

Sir Bobby agreed. "It does not affect the bid one iota in the context of the world and that's the opinion of the Fifa [world governing body] delegates who matter," he said.

Beckenbauer, who is also in Cannes promoting the German bid, agreed it was time to stop invoking the gentleman's agreement, brokered by Sir Bert Millichip and Uefa officials when Millichip was in charge of the FA. "The English have a new leadership and it is all in the past now," Beckenbauer said. The president of the German campaign team had earlier said he was surprised that the English FA continued to try to ignore the accord that was

struck by senior members of Uefa, the European governing body. "We did not count on the candidature of the English," said Beckenbauer, Germany's former World Cup captain and manager. "We supported England to get the European Championship in 1996 so we expected support from them for the World Cup. We were a little disappointed."

Beckenbauer was photographed alongside Sir Bobby, his rival ambassador in the English camp. He said the two remained good friends despite their respective tasks in the race to stage the 2006 tournament. "The last time I saw Bobby was at the Manchester United-Bayern Munich game," Beckenbauer said. "We often meet. I like him very much. He's doing his job and I'm doing mine which is how it should be."

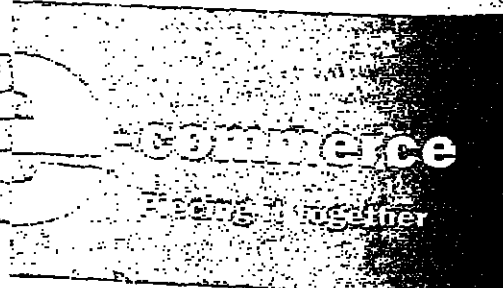
Beckenbauer, respected throughout the game, was unanimous when it came to England's qualifications to stage the World Cup. "In my opinion, England and Germany have an equal chance," he said. "We, like them, can offer everything. I can't say which is the best because ultimately it's not up to me. It's for the Fifa executive committee to decide."

The next logical step is for the World Cup to go to South Africa," Beckenbauer said. "The question is, is Africa ready?"

MORSE

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COMMENT • FEATURES • ARTS • LISTINGS • TELEVISION

BY ANNA PAVORD

It earned its place in history by sending an entire country mad. And the tulip remains 'the most seductive, the most capricious, the most various, subtle, powerful and intriguing flower that has ever grown on earth'

The very concept of a "virus" was not understood in the modern sense until the 1880s. And only the

Those who could not afford the tulips themselves commissioned artists such as Ambrosius Bosschaert and Balthasar van der Ast to paint them. Even the grand master of Dutch flower painting, Jan van Huysum, could rarely command more than 5,000 guilders for a painting. But a single bulb of the tulip 'Admiral Lieffens' changed hands for 4,400 guilders at a bulb auction in Alkmaar on 5 February 1637. So the

In the second half of the 16th century, these Protestant Huguenots most probably brought the tulip into England from Flanders. Long before the Dutch cornered the market, this was the most important centre of tulip breeding in Europe. Some settled in Norwich. Others, such as the Flemish botanist Lobelius, settled around Lime Street in the City of London. Huguenot refugees brought the tulip into Ireland, too, where the Dublin Florists' Soci-

In its day, Stakehill was regarded as a perfect example of the way in which "high culture and exquisite taste can be associated

Anna Paword writes on gardening every Saturday in 'The Independent'. To order her book, 'The Tulip' (Bloomsbury) at the special price of £25 (p&p extra), call 01634 298 036 quoting the reference '25 tulip'

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NHS in crisis

Sir: No say that Florence Nightingale would be shocked and saddened were she to return to a present-day hospital ward would be an understatement.

During the century after she founded the nursing profession as we knew it, to be a nurse was a source of pride and fulfilment. The "old-fashioned" ward sister knew and cared about every patient on her ward, knew, taught and counselled each nurse under her, organised and managed her team from senior doctor to lowly cleaner and was a mother figure to all on her ward. She was the respected and esteemed team leader who knew how to get the best out of her staff. A manager in multi with a clipboard can never command the same qualities.

To work on a well-organised ward with a good sister was a pleasure: very hard work but fulfilling as one felt valued by the patients, the team and society. What we earned was less important. ANN PUGH
York

Sir: The "80 crisis" has led to another staff shortage in the NHS. This will no doubt give way to another round of pay claims, the most eagerly highlighted by the media being that from nurses.

Could I shock you by saying that hour for hour a junior doctor earns roughly the same as a nurse? They only earn the "fortune" perceived because they work such long hours - because there aren't enough doctors.

It is the whole work force of the NHS that counts. Nurses, doctors, porters, cleaners and even (reluctantly) managers. Without them the NHS is doomed, so all reasonable pay demands must be met.

However, before April we will be told that public funds will not stretch, and then the public and the politicians will have a choice. Do we want taxes to remain as low as they are, or do we want a health service that is full of well-motivated, well-trained and physically and mentally alert staff? Because we can't have both.

You get what you pay for.
Dr C COLE
Queen Alexandra Hospital
Cosham, Hampshire

Sir: We shall enter the new millennium as we leave this one with public health care in crisis. Not because of finite resources but because health, like housing and education, is a poor competitor when compared with the "essentials" of society such as advertising, weapons and banking.

This absurdity is a consequence of running society in the interests of the wealthy. Governments cannot withstand the rich as they move their investments to the profitable areas of the globe. Hence countries compete for investment by offering low wages, low taxation and poor social welfare.

If we wish to institute social health, we must remove power from the rich. Then we can set humane priorities.
EDC BEST
Lancaster

Sir: Do not be fooled by the Victorian facade at our Chelsea site. As you say, the Royal Marsden is a world-renowned centre. We must pay up to prevent the decline of our health service. 6 January. We could not maintain our reputation at the forefront of cancer care, treatment and research if we did not invest in buildings and facilities.

In the past seven years nearly £50m has been spent on new wards, operating theatres, treatment and diagnostic facilities. For example, we opened a new clinical block in 1992 and our purpose-designed children's unit opened in 1993; a diagnostic imaging department and breast diagnostic unit opened in 1994; a fully integrated haematology unit in 1997 and a rehabilitation unit with a whole range of facilities for patients recovering from cancer treatment in 1998.

Where designed to be accessible and well-organised for patients and



Signs of God No 4: A signed conversation takes place in the vestry of St Mary of the Angels, Cardiff, which serves a well-organised community of deaf Christians
Tim Hetherington

accommodating to new clinical practices and the latest medical technology. Our expertise in radiotherapy, for instance, is recognised by an ISO (International Standards Organisation) 9001 quality standard. We are continuing to invest in the fabric of the hospital for the sake both of patients receiving care and of staff delivering it.
TESSA GREEN
Chairman
Royal Marsden NHS Trust
London SW3

Sir: Jeremy Laurance highlights an issue with which I am all too familiar ("Cash shortage keeps woman in hospital for 10 months", 12 January). There are two fundamental problems - the division between health and social services and chronic underfunding. Responsibility for older people's health and social care should be vested in a single community care authority to ensure that older people receive services which meet their individual needs.

Age Concern receives many calls where health authorities and local authorities say that they cannot foot the bill for nursing home care. This situation could become more critical in the light of the recent High Court decision which firmly places the sole responsibility of all nursing care on the NHS. The Government needs to issue guidance on this as soon as possible to ensure that the rights of people like Nellie O'Reardon are clear and that they are not left waiting for funding. Older people who need residential care now cannot afford to wait for new policies which might take years to implement.
SALLY GREENGROSS
Director General
Age Concern
London SW16

Public and private

Sir: The Robin Cook saga has again posed the question, "Is a person's private behaviour relevant to their public performance?" Of those who claim

that episodes of human fallibility in private are proof of hitherto undiscovered public inadequacies I ask for evidence, for the reverse is often the case.

The world of politics is littered with people whose private inadequacies would initially lead one to think them incapable of their public roles, but they seemed to cope. Churchill's fondness for a dram didn't prevent him leading the nation through the Second World War. Lloyd George's predilection for the opposite sex didn't prevent him leading the country and at least one ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer has had some difficulty remembering to pay his Visa bill.

Conversely, wasn't Adolf Hitler reputedly very good with children? LAWRENCE ROBERTS
Winterton, Lincolnshire

Sir: The view is being expressed, in support of Mrs Cook's revelations concerning her husband, that the humiliation suffered at his hands justifies her actions. However, in cases of domestic violence, it is said, quite rightly, that there is no provocation which would ever

Sir: Hamish McRae asks why the EU is more corrupt than its constituent countries ("Corruption's bad for your wealth", 12 January). Isn't the answer that we are all more prone to cheating members of a different tribe/family/country than to cheating our own? The moral: keep the EU budget to a minimum.
RS MUSGRAVE
Durham

Sir: With reference to your article on the BT Newcastle call centre (Magazine, 2 January), your comments on Newcastle were as predictable as expected. "A city that is struggling to leave the 19th century" - got a life: Newcastle is one of the most vibrant cities in the country.

justify a husband striking his wife. How therefore, is it possible to justify Mrs Cook's actions? It seems to me that Mr Cook has been duffed up in a quite frightening manner.
P GORDON
Bournemouth, Dorset

Fluoride 'choice'

Sir: Pamela Taylor (letter, 12 January) argues that the water industry's proposals offer choice over whether to fluoridate supplies. I would be interested to hear what choice I have as a consumer if I wish to avoid imbibing excess fluoride in my democratically fluoridated water. Pay my water rates and buy bottled water, presumably.

The one method of preventing dental caries that has no malign side-effects, is more effective than any other method, and actually saves money, is reducing intake of refined sugar in all its forms. Of course, there's no profit in it. Or am I being cynical?
CHARLES HARRIS
London NW3

IN BRIEF

"£16,000 per year ... is as good as it gets in a depressed post-industrial town" - well, I'm an ordinary working person and I earn far more than that, as do most of my associates.
PHIL DENT
Chester-le-Street, Durham

Sir: Elizabeth Stuart (letter, 12 January) says that the point of the Christ event lies not in what Jesus did but in who he was. It is this kind of theology - making fantastical claims for things invisible - which has allowed the churches for centuries to ignore the teachings of Jesus in favour of falling out over esoteric metaphysical speculation

Sir: Ninety-eight per cent of Europeans do not consume drinking water to which fluoride has been added. The 2 per cent are, almost exclusively, in the British Isles. There are no "communities wanting fluoridation" (letter, 12 January).
PAT RATTIGAN
Chesham, Derbyshire

Virgin's price

Sir: I feel compelled to correct the impression that you gave in your two articles on Virgin Radio (12 January).

Perhaps uniquely among the major British radio stations the management (as opposed to the shareholders) of Virgin Radio has remained unchanged over the last five years.

On 6 May 1997 Virgin and Capital announced that they had entered into an agreement to sell Virgin Radio for £65m. Virgin did not sell its radio station for a materially different consideration to Ginger. Even after a deduction for Virgin's investment in Ginger, the cash proceeds from the transaction were well in excess of

£50m, and not £16m as you have suggested.

There was no need for an amazing "turn-around" to reach the announced profits in October because the company had been generating operating profits for the two prior years. Richard Branson and Virgin Interests had never consequently needed to invest over £10m.

KENNETH IBBETT
Chief Executive
Virgin Media Group
London W1

Islam hijacked

Sir: As an older Muslim, it saddens me and many of my generation to observe Islam being hijacked by men like Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein, reduced in spirituality and then used as a political tool of violence, all which is having a negative effect on impressionable younger Muslims and on how Islam is perceived in general.

Many Muslims protested for an end to the recent bombing of Iraq before the start of our holy month of Ramadan; to have continued would have been viewed as an outrage against Islam. But what about the outrages committed by Muslims during Ramadan? The murder of innocent hostages in Yemen as well as the planned bombings, the provocative and destructive rantings and rhetoric of Saddam Hussein, a call to all "good" Muslims to go and kill an American or British citizen by Osama bin Laden - are these not worse?

I would ask my younger Muslim brothers and sisters who support and demonstrate for Saddam Hussein how long they would continue to rally behind him if they had to live under his oppressive hand. Let us not allow the greatness and beauty of Islam to enter its Dark Ages, to lose its humanity and spirituality and become equated with terrorism, violence and oppression.
Dr ABDUL KARIM
Cambridge

Sex before the Pill

Sir: Deborah Orr writes that "sexual liberation ... began with the advent of the oral contraceptive" ("The myth of sexual freedom", 8 January).

I am now 81 and before I was 20 I had some happy love affairs. This was before the Second World War and long before the advent of the Pill. I had to be very careful about contraception and used a cap, which didn't bother me or my lovers. As I did not at that age want to have a baby I did not consider a lover as a potential father and felt wholly responsible for not allowing him to be.

If a woman does not want a baby she can prevent it unless she is careless or very unlucky. She herself can be in control of this very important issue and I cannot see why she should want to share her control with a man, unless she wants to have his baby, in which case they should discuss it.

I would prefer to remain anonymous for the sake of my children and grandchildren.
NAME AND ADDRESS
SUPPLIED

Sir: The underlying premise of K Haggett's diatribe about the supposed immorality of pregnancy outside marriage (letter, 11 January) is wholly false.

Throughout almost the whole of human history, and in much of the Third World today, infant mortality rates have been so high that the fear has been of failing to rear an adult successor, not of having more children than one could support. It has repeatedly been demonstrated that, regardless of the introduction of effective contraception, fertility rates do not begin to fall until there has been a sustained reduction in infant mortality.

In Britain, until the introduction of welfare support for the elderly, a barren marriage, with no children to care for parents in old age, was a dreaded prospect. There are many alive today who can remember when to become too old to work meant entry to the workhouse if there was no family support. To ally such fears, it was common practice for a marriage not to be finalised until the bride-to-be was pregnant. If pregnancy failed to occur within a decent time the betrothal was dissolved without recrimination and both parties were free to seek a new partner.

Young people should be discouraged from promiscuity on compelling health grounds and because it is corrosive to self-respect. To go beyond this in a return to oppressive, hypocritical pseudo-morality would benefit no one.
KENNETH CAMPBELL
Kettering, Northamptonshire

Pupils' progress

Sir: Far from being unlikely to deliver our pledge to reduce infant class sizes to 30 or below by the next election (leading article, 9 January), we have already made substantial progress and we expect that most schools will meet that pledge by September 2000, over a year ahead of schedule, with the remainder doing so by September 2001.

More than 100,000 infants are already in smaller classes as a result of money invested in teachers and classrooms. We have already allocated £57m and over the next three years we will allocate a further £560m to meet the pledge in full.
ESTELLE MORRIS
Minister of State
Department for Education and Employment
London SW1

Man of the years

Sir: Please thank Nicolas Walter (letter, 12 January) for coming to the defence of Dionysius Exiguus in the discussion about the millennium and the Year Zero. It would be terrible to go down in history as
Dennis the Short
Who was short
Of a school
PETER GALE
Ramsey, Isle of Man

A meeting of monarchs on the sea coast of Pretoria

HERE'S THE latest instalment of the rediscovered Shakespearean saga, *The History of King Tony or New Labour's Lost Love*. King Tony and Queen Cheryl have flown to South Africa to meet King Nelson Mandela, who was cruelly imprisoned and held from his inheritance for so long by the wicked Regent, Prince W Botha.

As an airport, South Africa, King Tony emerges from the aircraft, followed by his brothers, his children, his nephews and his grandsons. There comes to meet them King Nelson Mandela of South Africa, with courtiers.

King Nelson: Welcome, King Tony, twice welcome to our shores.

Although you English have overcome our men, And beaten us in bloody fearful combat, Yet I praise your prowess on the field.

King Tony: Victory in battle? This comes as news to me!

Indeed? If Mandelson were here, he'd know the score.

Alas! He shall advise me nevermore!

A newspaper hack steps forward from the crowd.

Ha! Your Majesty, I think the King refers to certain cricket matches played last year.

In which the English beat the Springbok side.

Nelson: Spot on! You've got it right! For you must know

That I now take a great new pride in sport Which is the passport to my people's hearts.

At least if they are white, I mean to say.

My black South Africans could not care less. Except for soccer, which they seem to love.

I only wish my black footballing team Was half as good as our white rugby boys!

So, how are things at home?

Tony: Oh, fine, fine, fine!

Nelson: Then there's no truth at all in what I read Of sleaze and cynicism, Cabinet splits...

Tony: These are the little things which come to vex us.

Above which we should always rise care-free. Leaving us time to face the real tasks, Of health and schools and roads at *cetera*.

Our plan is now in place and we have done



MILES KINGSTON

The spirit of Mandelson: 'Oh Tony, Tony, waste no time on this! They do not want the health and schools routine!'

Two thirds of what we pledged ourselves to do! Let us be judged by what we have achieved And not what petty tabloids have believed!

There appears to King Tony the spirit of Mandelson, which only he can see.

Spirit: Oh Tony, Tony, waste no time on this!

That's all for home consumption. While you're here, Make friends with old man Nelson - he can help

With Libya, Lockerbie and all that, And that would be a great PR coup for you!

But King Nelson is an ageing man

And not long for this world: see if you can Discover his successor and make friends.

Yet do it quick! He looks not well to me.

The spirit of Mandelson vanishes.

Tony: Oh, stay, imperfect spirit, stay and say What things await me on my coming home!

This book by Duke Cook's wife - does it contain Much matter to my future loss or gain?

The spirit of Mandelson returns, looking flustered.

Spirit: Look, sweetie, I can't keep on doing this - These international visions cost the earth!

But since I've got another minute more, Yes, I have read Madame Cook's little oeuvre. She moans a lot, and says that Cook hates Brown.

But so we all do, dear, what's new there?

I'd forget about the book if I were you...

Now fly home to rebuild my career!

The Duke of Prescott has it in for me, I fear!

The spirit of Mandelson vanishes for a second time.

Nelson: King Tony, tho' you seem lost in thought, may I

Present to you th' Archbishop, Desmond Tutu?

Tony: Et Tutu, Brute?

Tutu: What's that?

Nelson: I didn't catch...

The spirit of Mandelson reappears, looking hot and bothered.

Spirit: Tony, are you affected by the baking weather?

For God's sake man, just pull yourself together! The spirit vanishes for the final time. Exit all, looking thoughtful, save for the newspaper hack.

Backs: King Tony's looking more than a little trail... I think I'll try that on the Daily Mail. Exit, looking for a phone.

More of this anon, sweet gentles.

مجلس الوزراء

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The Foreign Office must shrug off the burdens of the past

IF EVER proof were required of Britain's need to move from the burdens of the past to a more modest role in the world of the future, it must be in the procession of crises now hitting the Foreign Office. Yemen, Chechnya, Sierra Leone and Iraq: they are all serving to complicate the work of the Foreign Office with demands that it seems loath to understand. These crises are distinct in detail, of course. Chechnya has posed the problem of protection of nationals working abroad, and what we may reasonably ask of them in terms of information. Yemen asks us to choose between supporting our passport-holders and pursuing our foreign relations. Sierra Leone displays the deficiencies of intervention, while Iraq exposes the strains of our lonely loyalty to Washington.

But if there are common threads, then they are these. One - which we cannot easily get over - is the entanglements of past empire. London has become a home for all sorts of refugees and immigrants not just because of our tolerance but because we ruled so many places for so long. When we were fighting Communism in Aden or the Middle East, we encouraged fundamentalism abroad and allowed its leaders to take refuge here. Times change but we have to live with a colonial past, just as the French do with Algerian dissidents. And we have to accept, as the French must do too, that we can no longer control the fate of our former territories, in west Africa or anywhere else. That we lost no wars, and gave up our empire voluntarily, makes us in some ways more complacent, not better able to cope.

The second point is the protection of British citizens abroad. Like it or not - and the Foreign Office would clearly love the whole development to go away - more and more Britons are travelling abroad to faraway places for pleasure and business. They fall ill, and get taken hostage and shot at. In other words, they cause problems.

But they also, pace Sir David Gore-Booth and the other traditionalists in the Foreign Office, are the people who pay the salaries of the Foreign Office staff. For too long have the consular duties of British embassies been treated as the lesser area of our activities abroad.

If the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, had spent more time beefing up the consular service and less in worrying about his absurd ethical foreign policy and the social mix of his staff, we might be better able to cope with the Yemen situation. As it is, he is once again having to react to a crisis in which public concern has taken the initiative.

The worst foreign policy statement to come out of a government was Douglas Hurd's statement that we should aim to "punch above our weight in the world". We shouldn't. Our aim should be to develop a policy that suits our resources and supports our citizens as much as our interests abroad.



Mr Blair should find a useful job for his chum

WHERE NEXT for Peter Mandelson? The view of the Labour back benches is clear, namely that he should not be in government. They have made it plain to Mr Blair that, anxious as he may be to rehabilitate his old friend, Peter needs to do more penance for his error of judgement.

While many are settling old grievances, and others will never forgive the key architect of New Labour, Mr Blair will have to listen to his parliamentary grassroots.

He is entering choppy political waters, as we have seen in recent weeks, and he is going to need their patience and support. Thus, he may have quietly to drop his idea of pushing Mr Mandelson as some kind of "personal ambassador". But this is not to say that he should just let Mr Mandelson hang out to dry. For one thing, Mr Blair

might not be in Downing Street were it not for the efforts of the former trade secretary. And for another, Mr Blair and Mr Mandelson are friends. The Prime Minister needs and values his advice, comradeship and support. He should be allowed it.

One does not have to be a fully paid up subscriber to the *Führerprinzip* to accept that Mr Blair is entitled to choose his own friends and advisers. Hostile party hacks may as well ask him not to listen to Cherie.

But the Prime Minister needs to find Mr Mandelson a useful role for reasons other than sentimentality. Even his worst critics might grant that Mr Mandelson is an intelligent man, who has shown a flair for presentation, campaigning and winning elections. And this is a year of elections, above all. Mr Mandelson would be an ideal choice to design campaigns and reinvigorate a neglected party machine. This would not preclude him from making the occasional thoughtful speech on policy, or the Third Way. And he can also be used to press the vital need for Britain

to join the single currency. The ambitious Mr Mandelson might find such a prospect irksome. He long wanted a "proper job", a ministry, and to get away from spin. But he blew it. He must accept that. The party needs his talents. And, after he's spent a decent period of selfless service, Mr Blair will have the ammunition to silence critics; he can then call on Mr Mandelson to return to the Cabinet table. The penance will be worth it, for everyone.

Mischief maker

YESTERDAY WE reported that Lord Woolf, Master of the Rolls, would not be sitting on the rehearing of the Pinochet case after objections from the former dictator's lawyers. Lord Browne-Wilkinson, chairman of the appeal committee, called us "mischievous" (while admitting the story was true). Quite right. And long may it continue. As the press baron Lord Beaverbrook once said, it's the duty of the press to create mischief, a dictum as apposite today as ever.

This phoney story of a bloodless man emerging from the shadows

HERE'S HOW it goes. Yesterday morning, when the other broadsheets had front pages dominated by the conclusions of the enquiry into Ashworth hospital, *The Daily Telegraph* alone led with another twist in the Peter Mandelson saga. "Book tells of plot to succeed Blair," claimed the sub-headline. On page 4, the main story was entitled: "Mandelson 'plotted to become PM.'" And the plot? Ah yes, the plot. The plot is outlined in chapter 16 of Paul Routledge's book about Peter Mandelson - *Mandy: the Unauthorized Biography of Peter Mandelson* - to be published next week.

"There had always been a Blair project," declares Mr Routledge, thoughtfully sipping the details. "Now, however, there emerged from the shadows the Mandelson project."

Which was that Peter M. "could supplant Gordon Brown as Chancellor and succeed Tony Blair" as leader of the Labour Party and prime minister. Blimey! Even Routledge admits that "Initially it seemed a preposterous idea". After all, as he points out, everybody hates Mandy, and he couldn't even get elected to Labour's executive committee when last he stood. But then the evidence began to stack up for the sceptical biographer. And I'm going to outline it for you in detail. Here it is. Item one, an interview in the *New Statesman* with the union leader John Edmonds in which he's nasty about Gordon Brown and nice-ish about Peter Mandelson. Item two, an article in *The Spectator* a month later by Irwin Stelzer, economist and friend of Rupert Murdoch, comparing Brown unfavourably to

Mandelson. Item three, Philip Gould's book, *The Unfinished Revolution*, published in October, which absolved Mandelson from betraying Brown over the party leadership.

That's it. That's the entire "Mandelson project" which "emerged from the shadows". I have to say that we owe Mr Routledge a debt of gratitude for being able to discern, in the deep gloom, what most of us would never have noticed, no matter how hard we might have looked. It sometimes requires an active imagination to lend faces and voices to the nebulous shapes that disturb our sleep. Perhaps some day the minutes of the secret meeting between Messrs Stelzer, Edmonds and Mandelson will be published, and Routledge and *The Telegraph* will be vindicated.

It is a shame that the author could find no role in the plot for one of Peter's gay friends, because they must have been in there somewhere. The recent outing of Mandelson on television by the journalist, Matthew Parris, saved Routledge himself the disturbing task of being the occasion for another bout of tabloid gay-bashing. But in chapter 1 ("Scandal") Routledge recalls that, in the aftermath of the Ron Davies affair, "The view began to take hold that Mandy was only the outward and visible sign of a wider network of homosexual men in key positions in public life."

The view "took hold" of the columnist Richard Littlejohn ("characteristically trenchant"), and Norman Tebbit ("characteristically blunt"), who both compared homosexuals to Freemasons. It took hold of "Tory politicians



DAVID AARONOVITCH
After all, everybody hates Mandy and he couldn't even get elected to the Labour executive

who asked questions about the magic fraternity. (I am unsure whether "the magic fraternity" is a Tory phrase, or Routledge's own.) It took hold of "some observers (who) see the club [of New Labour insiders] as a 'pink Mafia' or, in the amusing American parlance, the 'hominern.'" It took hold of Stephen Bayley, former artistic director of the Millennium Dome, who is quoted as saying: "What is worrying is that people of power and influence are involved in an interest group which just happens to be a sexual one. It is a secretive interest group. It just happens to be about male gay sex."

Bayley goes on, uninterrupted by Routledge: "It is both defined by the bonds of secrecy and strengthened by them. As soon as those bonds are loosened, its powers are diminished." A bit like secret protocols, really. God,

when an idea "takes hold", it's amazing where it can lead you! But Bayley's sentiments do make it all the more surprising that, in chapter 7 ("Outed"), Mr Routledge professes himself astonished that Peter Mandelson will not just come out and tell everyone about his sex life.

"The question arises: why does Peter Mandelson deny his sexual orientation?" Routledge writes.

Well, he does acknowledge it a bit, Routledge concedes; for here are the ubiquitous "others" again to "argue that Mandelson uses his gayness as a political and social weapon". If that's true, then Mr M can hardly complain when Fleet Street camps (whoops, sorry) on his doorstep. Furthermore: "The issue of Mandelson's sexual orientation will not go away, certainly not until he makes a clear, unambiguous statement that satisfies..." That satisfies whom, Paul? Lord Tebbit? Stephen Bayley? Me? No: "That satisfies his gay critics."

There you have it. If it weren't for the "gay critics" the whole "issue" would go away. Paul Routledge himself has said enough about Peter Mandelson's sexuality to put the "issue" beyond doubt for all of us straight, but those "gay critics" demand more. Perhaps it was their presence that prevented Routledge from attempting any serious analysis of exactly why someone like Peter Mandelson should prefer not to wear his sexuality round his neck, in a way heterosexuals never have to worry about. After all, to find out why homosexual politicians might want to stay in the closet, Paul only has to reflect

on the articles he himself writes about them. The same reflection would also give Paul Routledge other insights, absent from the book. Such as, what was it about old Labour that became so unattractive to almost all classes of voter that the Blair project was seen as the solution? This analysis holds the key to Labour history for the last 20 years, and Peter Mandelson played an important strategic part in providing it. So did Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, and Neil Kinnock.

I have known Peter Mandelson for more than 20 years, and met Paul Routledge (whom I like enormously) at Routledge's own request. Some inconsequential remarks by me are (accurately) reported in the book. And it was not going to be, he told me, a "stitch-up". Yet the Peter Mandelson who "emerges from the shadows" is a man all of whose faults are magnified, and all of whose achievements are diminished. He is bloodless, manipulating, unprincipled, treacherous and calculating. Even his statement about Pinochet, that it would be "gut-wrenching" to see the old tyrant brought to justice, is attributed by Routledge (with no evidence) to a desire to curry favour in the party, and help him fulfil his shadowy plan.

I am not a Mandy man, and have never taken a briefing from him, or seen him socially for several years. I just happen to know something about him and what really makes him tick. And that puts me well ahead of anyone who relies on this homophobic and conspiracy-obsessed work of partisanship for their understanding of an important modern political figure.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Wow, I've just won a big bank account!"
Philip Ozersky,
who caught and then sold Mark McGwire's
record-breaking baseball for £1.6million

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"When one burns one's bridges, what a very nice fire it makes."
Dylan Thomas,
Welsh playwright and poet

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MONITOR

ALL THE NEWS OF THE WORLD

US newspapers comment on the progress of President Clinton's Senate trial

IT TURNED out that there was no depth to which this president would not blithely stoop to conquer, or at least to avoid defeat. And it turned out that there were people willing to aid the president in this dirty work. And it turned out that a largely Democratic press corps that was feeling queasy about its role in bringing down a Democratic president would grasp the excuse to broadcast the sexual secrets of Republicans. And so an ethical code that stood, bat-

tered and bruised but still surviving, is finally destroyed. *The Washington Post*

AS THEY look at the impeachment spectacle, Americans do not see individuals sacrificing weekends and evenings to conduct the nation's business. They see people who care little for anything other than their desire to bring Clinton down or to protect him. Bill Clinton's fate is not yet decided. But the fate of those judging

him has been. The widening gap between Washington and the rest of the country will not begin to close until Washington makes a greater effort to understand the values held so strongly by ordinary people. *USA Today*

several hundred federal judges. If the evidence supports the allegations of material perjury or obstruction of justice to the reasonable satisfaction of most senators, then the Senate has a duty to remove Bill Clinton from office. The historical consequences of sweeping such conduct under a congressional carpet would be too serious. *The Detroit News*

THE PRESIDENT will survive; the partisans will gripe, and

Kenneth Starr will try to keep his office open forever. Meanwhile, the public will be further alienated from a Congress totally out of touch with the hinterland. Instead of dissing (denigrating) polls (or trying to parse their political meaning) the Senate would be wiser to listen to the message that the pollees are sending. Enough already. This trial is silly, not historic. Listen now, or listen at the polls in 2000. *Philadelphia Inquirer*

PANDORA

PANDORA IS looking forward to Michael Cockerell's *How To Be Home Secretary* (Sunday, 24 January, BBC2), in which – for the first time – documentary television cameras are allowed inside the Home Office. Of special interest will be the segment in which the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, who is ultimately responsible for M15, discusses the M15 file that exists on him, initiated back in his so-called "subversive" days in the Seventies. Has Jack read it? Can we all have an on-air peek?

LAST THURSDAY, just a day after a group of rambles, led by Andrew Bennett MP and accompanied by several policemen, marched down the controversial footpath in East Sussex belonging to Nicholas Van Hoogstraten, a new barbed-wire fence was erected. Although his spokesman had told the press that Van Hoogstraten had left the country to holiday in France, a rambles spokesman yesterday assured Pandora that the landowner supervised the building of the fence. In the meantime, Van Hoogstraten – a multimillionaire who made his early fortune in Brighton property and was sentenced to Wormwood Scrubs back in the Sixties for a hand-grenade attack on the home of a business associate – has just found a new journalistic ally following years of savage press attacks. Auberon Waugh, in his column last Sunday, expressed his loathing for the rambles and described Van Hoogstraten as "not the sort of person one would wish to ask to tea" but "ideal as a champion against the Rambles Association".

SCOTTISH POWER was all set to launch its brand-new 23m national advertising campaign, designed by the Bartle Bogle Hegarty agency to extol the benefits of signing up with the gas and electric firm. Then, new year storms blasted the North Country.

"We decided to postpone the campaign for a while," a Scottish Power spokesman told Pandora. "Instead we've been running advertisements advising the 20,000 people who are entitled to compensation – £50 for 24 hours without power – to apply for it." Sounds like a perfect example of that old ad agency maxim: "Don't mix your messages."



IN THE latest issue of *Loaded*, Pandora was amused to read that the Arsenal midfielder, Ray Parlour, is dishing the dirt on his team mate Tony Adams, with whom he shares a room on away trips. Speaking of Tony, whose playing career reboomed after giving up the booze a while back, Ray confides: "When he's not thinking about his piano, he's writing poems. I'll be lying there trying to get off to kip and he's in the bathroom with the light on and his notebook going: 'ere Ray, listen to this what I've written.'" Parlour confesses that he's not always an enthusiastic audience for Adams's late-night readings, but assures the lads that: "We're like a couple of old dears!"

THE SAGA of Sly Stallone's Miami house has been exhaustively covered by Pandora, including Rambo's desire to sell the waterfront property to the London-based Orient Express group and his neighbours' objections to having a luxury hotel built in their vicinity.

Now a new buyer for Sly's pad has appeared on the horizon. His name is Gunther IV, he's a frisky Alsatian dog and he inherited a fortune from his canine father who was left a reported \$65m (£40m) by a German countess back in 1962. The animal now owns a company said to be worth \$200m, and houses in the Caribbean and in Europe.

He has expressed his approval of the property in Miami by running around the garden with one of his handlers. Pandora suspects that Madonna, who lives nearby and was on the verge of selling her own house recently, might be far happier to welcome a guard dog into the neighbourhood than crowds of gawping tourists.

KENNETH BRANAGH, about to direct *Love's Labour's Lost* as a film musical, has made a rather surprising casting decision. The Beverly Hills brat-next-door star of *Clueless*, Alicia Silverstone (pictured), will play opposite Branagh.

Nobody was more surprised than the 22-year-old Alicia. "I can't do this," she told him. Branagh responded: "Of course you can." Filming starts in this country in February. Silverstone is working hard on her singing lessons.

What's wrong with vindictive wives?



YASMIN ALIBHAI-BROWN
Mr Cook should praise his ex-wife's courage and tell his boys to respect their wonderful mother

I HAVE read with incredulity the rubbish, mostly written by fortysomething men up to no good I am sure, that has followed in the wake of the book by Margaret Cook (dump the surname – Margaret) about her marriage to Robin Cook, and the ignoble end at Heathrow airport of that period of her life. It is personal, they say – vindictive, vengeful and embittered.

Yes, what else is someone in her position supposed to feel? You may persuade yourself that you will try not to show these feelings, because the world will love and respect you less for this than if you pretend a saintly forgiveness, of the sort that Hillary Clinton has now made her own. But burning hurt and rage are what you feel, and revenge (preferably divine) is what you yearn for. Ask me – I know, and I wrote an emotional book about it.

What gets these commentators really foaming is not only that the partner of a famous or powerful person should be so weak as to respond in these human ways, but that she or he should then reveal this vulnerability. They have nothing to

a public figure has the same rights as you or me to say and write what they wish about their lives, especially when they have been maltreated. Or are they expected to render their pain invisible just to keep up appearances?

Writing, as the playwright David Edgar said this week, is a fundamental and universal human right. It is also a "vital part of being human to try to understand why other human beings – nasty as well as nice – behave as they do". Other criticisms don't stand up, either.

If Dr Cook has said things that have alarmed her ex-husband's colleagues because of political implications, why should this be any more outlandish and unethical than the dirt-digging carried out by Paul Routledge and other unauthorised biographers? Maybe it is because she is not a seedy political chap hanging out with Charlie Whelan, but a fragile wife, "a slight and delicate creature" (the clever title of her book) who should be coping with her knowledge by devoting herself to nurturing a bonsai tree.

As for the ludicrous worries that

if we scrutinise public figures in this way the best people will simply avoid public life, we should be more concerned that these ambitious and able people will fail to get the best partners in life – because anyone with personality, intellect and self-respect will refuse to sign away their rights and become trophies of compliance – thus leaving the selection pool bubbling with bland secretaries and too-eager-to-please personal assistants.

We used to laugh and cry at the appalling loyalty displayed by Tory wives and ex-wives in the inglorious past. Remember Mrs David Mellor as she was forced to smile for photographers after the dreadful revelations about her philandering husband – who then left her anyway for a rich woman with deadly red lipstick. Recall, too, the depressing good behaviour of Mrs Tim Yeo and Mrs Alan Clark as they stood by their men, partly I imagine, because they felt they had no other options.

You would have hoped that Labour men and women, although clearly not able to resist sexual temptation any more than the last

lot, might be more democratic and fair in the way they dealt with those they betrayed and left after many years of good service. And if this is indeed "new" Britain, which is more open and receptive to emotion, as everyone from Martin Jacques to Susie Orbach seems to be suggesting, we should rejoice that people like Margaret Cook are no longer hampered by the pressures of out-of-date, unjust social constraints.

Margaret is a thoroughly modern, bright, professional, emotionally honest woman, who has written a lively account of a survivor who saw it all her way, at least after Robin flew away. Like Diana, Princess of Wales, she refused to read out the part written for her by someone else. She wanted it put down as it happened, from her point of view.

If Robin Cook wants to do the right thing now and come out shining, all he has to do is praise his ex-wife for having the courage to do what she has done, say that he can understand how he has made her feel, tell his boys to respect their wonderful mother, and wish her well with all his heart.

We must send in troops to stop the killing in Kosovo



MARY KALDOR
There should be no talk of a political settlement before a ceasefire is firmly established

JUST BEFORE Christmas, Veran Matic, director of the independent Belgrade radio station B92, met the American special envoy to the Balkans, Richard Holbrooke, and asked him why he continued to talk to Slobodan Milosevic. Holbrooke replied that there was no credible opposition leader. Matic replied that what was important was not individual leaders but support for a broad range of democratic initiatives to build an alternative public opinion.

In wars, it is always the democratic groups committed to peaceful methods of managing conflict that get squeezed. War is polarising – there is no space for democratic initiatives. Nowhere is this more true than in Kosovo, where 10 years of non-violent resistance by Kosovan Albanians to Serbian repression failed to gain international support. Within Kosovo, the peaceful approach has lost legitimacy. The international community's task is to find a political solution has been much harder since the war began.

The political positions of both Milosevic and the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) depend on their uncompromising stance and, indeed, on continuing violence. It is hard to see how the KLA could ever give up its demand for independence, or how Milosevic could ever concede more than token limited autonomy (after all, it was he who took away the province's autonomy in 1989). Moreover, the international community cannot even fulfil its role as mediator because of its own distaste for independence, for fear of further fragmentation.

The escalation of the violence is reminiscent of the war in Bosnia Herzegovina. The international community is reluctant to intervene militarily and pin its hopes on the success of political negotiations, which are always elusive. The humanitarian crisis and media attention slowly drag them into the

conflict, however. In the autumn, after the plight of Albanians driven from their homes and living in woods was publicised, the international community threatened air strikes on Serbia and succeeded in negotiating a ceasefire and partial withdrawal of Serbian troops, to be monitored by unarmed verifiers under the auspices of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

The verifiers are even weaker than the peacekeepers were in Bosnia: they are particularly dependent on Serbian goodwill. Meanwhile, the political talks were supposed to continue. But they have got nowhere and, as in Bosnia, the very act of negotiation helps to legitimise the warring parties and further sideline moderate democratic voices; a stream of diplomats and politicians continue to visit Milosevic. Now the ceasefire is being eroded on both sides and Serbian forces are returning to the area in violation of the agreement.

The most likely scenario is that the war will continue, perhaps through several more broken ceasefires, with mostly civilian casualties.

huge physical destruction to villages and infrastructure, and many refugees and displaced persons.

Moreover, it will be difficult to contain the violence in Kosovo. Conflict could escalate in Macedonia and Montenegro, even in Albania. To avoid this scenario a change of strategy towards Kosovo is needed. There should be no talk of a political settlement before a ceasefire is firmly established and normal life has begun to return to the province.

This was, after all, the British government's approach to Northern Ireland: there was no question of involving the IRA in talks about Northern Ireland's political future before a ceasefire had been convincingly established. Milosevic is as much of a terrorist as Gerry Adams or Adam Demaci (the KLA spokesman) – if not more so.

Talks should focus on establishing a meaningful ceasefire enforced by peacekeeping troops under OSCE auspices who would also be responsible, as in Bosnia, for controlling weapons stores and for demilitarisation. The forces should be commanded by Europeans, probably British or French. There should be a token Russian presence to satisfy the Serbs and, if possible, a token US presence to satisfy the British who do not want to commit ground troops without this. At the same time, the "extraction force" that is currently based in Macedonia, under Nato auspices, should be expanded and renamed a "deterrent force" to intervene in the event that the ceasefire breaks down.

The initiative for this change of strategy would have to be taken by the Europeans. The Americans are unwilling to commit ground troops and the only form of military action they are prepared to take, as in Iraq and as was threatened earlier against Serbia, is air strikes.

But air strikes are notoriously counterproductive, especially if they



UN peacekeeping soldiers in the Balkans "should intervene"

are not followed through by ground troops. They provide an excuse for cracking down on the opposition and they increase support for extreme positions. The threat of air strikes in the autumn provided justification for closing down some independent media and the repressive university law, as well as making things difficult for aid organisations.

It also hardened opinion, not only in Serbia but in Republika Srpska as well. European governments have been pioneering a new approach to peace-enforcement that contrasts with the American preoccupation with bombing. The British Defence Review is innovative in the way that it reorients British armed forces to contingencies of the Bosnia and Kosovo type.

Moreover, this kind of thinking is not confined to the British. The Danes developed their own strategic concept during the Bosnian war and were very effective at enforcing humanitarian corridors and even eliminating Serbian tanks. A strat-

egy of this kind has to be combined with a political effort to support and build up democratic alternatives in Serbia as well as Kosovo and indeed in the whole Balkan region.

Milosevic needs to be isolated, not courted, by the international community, and indicted by the war crimes tribunal. The indictment of Radovan Karadzic did help open up new political perspectives in Bosnia. The international community needs to talk to and support the democrats, whoever they are and however marginal they appear today.

Those engaged in the fighting have to stop the violence, but they will never be able to find a lasting solution. In the end, it is independent-minded citizens such as Veran Matic and others who will create a situation where peace can be constructed.

Mary Kaldor's *New and Old Wars: Organised Violence in a Global Era* is published this month by Polity Press, price £29.50 hardback, £12.95 paperback.

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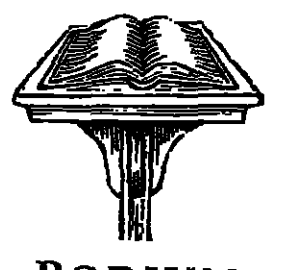
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Are call centres the new sweatshops?



VICKI BELT
From a speech by a research associate at the University of Newcastle to the Royal Geographical Society

CALL CENTRES are offices dedicated to delivering services to customers over the telephone. Call centres are used across a range of sectors, including financial services, travel and transport, information technology, marketing and retail. Call-centre staff, or "agents", typically spend their working hours seated at their desks in constant contact with customers, making or receiving telephone calls and processing information.

Europe has seen a huge growth in these call centres over the last 10 years. One study has claimed that at the end of 1997 there were as many as 3,560 call centres in the UK alone, employing a total of approximately 163,000 staff. This growth looks likely to continue into the next century.

Call centres have recently captured the attention of the media and the academic community. It has been argued that they are the "new sweatshops", and that they offer us a disturbing vision of the shape work will take in the future.

Women outnumber men in virtually all call centres. At the lowest, they make up 40 per

cent of employees; at the highest, 90 per cent. There are some differences between sectors, with males better represented in IT call centres than in others. On the whole the staff employed in call centres tend to be young, aged between 20 and 30.

The research seems to suggest that employers often consider females to be more suitable for call-centre work than males, mainly because they are regarded as having "natural" communication skills and the ability to "smile down the phone". In our research, this was a typical response: "I do think that there are advantages being in this business if you are female, because, in general, females are better at communicating – and it is all about communicating – making people feel a part of the team and making them feel as if they belong."

Call centres employ a range of the latest management techniques. In particular, team working and "empowerment" are widespread. The majority of call centres have flat organisational structures with three layers – agent, supervisor and manager. The relationships

between staff and management in the call centres that we studied were on the whole described positively. Most agents are on first-name terms with managers, and some described their centres as "family-like" environments.

The majority of call centres are not unionised, and staff had mixed views on this. Some agents, supervisors and managers were hostile to unions. Call-centre staff are heavily

monitored. Calls are often recorded, and supervisors can listen in to calls when they wish. In addition, copious statistics are collected about agents' performance. However, despite being hostile to this, most agents seem to accept monitoring as a necessary aspect of their work.

In line with other studies, our research found that agents are often frustrated by the repetitive nature of the job. Taking calls all day is deemed to be stressful, tiring and dull: "There's only so many times you can say what your name is and what the product is," one commented. "Sometimes you get 85 calls a day, and you just can't speak when you get out of here. It's terribly boring."

"I really try to think of other things that I do in my free time," said another. I do oriental dancing, belly-dancing, and I think, 'what would be a good costume?' I also do meditation and yoga, and I try to switch off completely and think of absolutely nothing. But you do find you have to resort to things to keep yourself sane after a little while of working in a call centre."

As a result of the routine and

stressful nature of taking calls all day, many agents complained of "burn-out". Indeed, staff turnover is high in many call centres because of this factor. It was clear that many agents feel that their work is undervalued by wider society. A number of agents said that they have constantly to "convince" people that they have a "proper" job.

However, despite this many women enjoy the atmosphere in call centres, claiming that they have "energy" and "buzz", and are "fast-moving". Furthermore, many call centres have developed an excellent work-related social life, and are considered sociable places with a good "team spirit".

About half of the women interviewed expressed a desire to move up the career ladder. However, agents stressed that promotion is difficult. Furthermore, most of the women with career aspirations did not express a desire to move beyond supervisory level.

There is a danger that call-centre work confirms women's position in servicing and caring roles, and their subordination in society as a whole.

Such childish behaviour



**ANN
TRENEMAN**

The Bramleys are looking for a fairy-tale ending. They want someone to kiss it all better

EVERYONE INVOLVED in the saga of the runaway foster-parents Jeff and Jennifer Bramley believes that what they are doing is for "the sake of the children". The police say it, the social workers insist on it, the various parents are all convinced of it. Certainly that is what the Bramleys themselves believe. In fact, the letter that they have written to the world at large pleading their case, begins: "We, Jeff, Jenny, Jade and Hannah, write this letter to tell the plight of a family that love each other and wishes to stay together." This is misleading in at least one respect. Jade is five. Hannah is three. They did not write this letter. Grown-ups wrote this letter, just as grown-ups created this mess.

I do not know why the Bramleys decided that now is the time to tell all. Perhaps, after 17 weeks on the run, they are growing tired of it all. Undoubtedly they have become obsessed with their plight - who wouldn't be? - and have decided that the only way to right things is to tell the world about their injustice. Thus they sat down at their secret location and addressed a letter "To Whom It May Concern". The letter fills three-and-a-half sides and tells us much that is supposed to be secret. They say they are good, honest, caring people who were rejected as adoptive parents because they were observed to say "no" too often.

It is the kind of stuff that makes your heart ache and you can see that they really do believe that they wrote the letter for Hannah and Jade. But it was two adults who decided that the only way forward was to run away from the system. It was the adults who have now decided they want to come in from the cold. And now it is the adults who believe that the great god of publicity will somehow put things right.

They are not the only ones who believe this. "If only we could get this story out, everyone would see how crazy it is and they would let me keep my daughter," one young mother said to me years ago. She, like the Bramleys, had chosen to disappear with her child rather than abide by a social services decision. She, too, was outraged. She, too, had a heartbreaking tale and good reason to rail against a system that is secretive to the point of obsessive-



PC Peter Morley holding two coats belonging to Hannah and Jade Bennett, found in the car abandoned by Jeff and Jennifer Bramley

Manni Mason

ness. It was against the law for me even to talk to this mother. Eventually the High Court got involved. "The upbringing of a young girl is at stake here!" said a barrister. He was wrong, of course. What was at stake was not a child's life but a system that tries to be caring but can also be ruthless.

That mother never got her publicity, and I don't know what happened to her. If she is still out there, hiding, then she will be noting that the first result of the Bramleys' plea has been not vindication, but soap opera and chaos. Everyone who ever touched the lives of these girls has been getting in on the act.

First came the natural mother, Jackie Bennett. This is a woman who has given up her children, then fought to get them back, and now has decided that the Bramleys should have them after all. "I want my children to be settled in one place, in one school, with a loving

family like yourselves," she says. I'm not sure whether we should believe her, but it certainly grabbed yesterday's headlines.

The next one to care and share was Paul Duckett. He is the father of Jade but has never had much to do with her upbringing. Not that this stopped him from appearing on the *Today* programme. The Bramleys, he says, cannot really love the children. "If they did, they wouldn't be dragging them around England in this nomadic style." He loves Jade very much, he says, and "this is hurting me a lot." He added: "You don't see me writing these big letters. It's a play purely to get the public on their side."

Social services are also worried. Not, however, about whatever circumstances led to this sad situation. By the way, we still do not know everything about these circumstances. The Bramleys did allude to them in their letter but some bits of

it have not been printed. It just goes to show that, though the soap opera is played out in public, in private the system continues to protect itself. Secrecy remains paramount. It is often said that the system has to be so secretive to "protect the children". This is true almost all of the time but when it breaks down - and drives people to abduct children - then secrecy is part of the problem, not the solution.

Anyway, it turns out that Liz Raiton, director of Cambridgeshire Social Services, is also worried for the sake of the children. "Are they going to school? Clearly it seems not. Are they going to the doctor? Are they having contact with other children? They need all that contact." Then she appealed to the Bramleys "to put the children first, over and above their own distress - even though I know that is incredibly difficult". It was time, she said, to give the children back.

It is enough to make you want the Bramleys to stay fugitives for ever but, I suspect, this is not to be. It seems inevitable that they will come back, after making contact in such a dramatic fashion. In fact the letter shows two people who are desperate to come home: "Jade and Hannah are two bright, intelligent, articulate children who love us with all their hearts. We ask therefore, will someone help us to be legally their Mummy and Daddy for ever, making the hopes and dreams of these two wonderful girls come true." The Bramleys are looking for a fairy-tale ending. They want Jim to fix it for them. They want someone to kiss it all better, just like that.

But if they are acting childishly, then they have company. All the grown-ups believe that they are right, and have found some moral reason why this is so. To hear Cambridgeshire Social Services going on about whether or not Jade and

Hannah are visiting a doctor beggars belief. The problem is not whether Jade and Hannah are visiting a doctor; the problem is that the system has messed up to such an extent that Jade and Hannah are fugitives whose foster-parents have had to appeal to the nation. That is what should be talked about, not doctor's appointments.

This is a dire state of affairs. The adults have messed up - and badly. In fact, if anyone should be giving lectures, it should be the children. Perhaps they should get their own lawyer to demand that all the grown-ups sit down now and figure out a way for the fugitives to come in from the cold and get a fair hearing. Then, after the adults all feel better, perhaps someone could figure out what really is in the best interests of these two little girls, who could be forgiven for thinking that unconditional love is a pretty hard thing to come by these days.

RIGHT OF REPLY

**PETER
MOORHOUSE**



The chairman of the Police Complaints Authority responds to criticism of their inquiry into the Lawrence case

THE INDEPENDENT'S criticisms of the PCA are surprising as when we supervised the investigation in 1997, and produced a summary report, it was described by *The Independent* as "a damning indictment of the inquiry into the racist murder of Stephen".

Your recent editorial omitted to say that charges would also have been preferred against four other officers involved, had they not retired. But we are not permitted to bring discipline charges against resigned or retired officers, under existing regulations.

The suggestion that "internal investigations are not tough enough to control a force that can mishandle witnesses, lose or destroy evidence, and ignore promising leads" is questionable. The authority would have charged all five senior officers for these very failings.

Effective liaison with victims of crime has long been a problem for the police service. The investigation concluded that the failures in this case lay with senior officers conducting the murder inquiry. It would be wrong to bring disciplinary action against inexperienced junior officers who attempted and failed to provide effective family liaison in this case.

The discipline review had to decide whether officers who took part in the murder inquiry breached the Police Discipline Code. The system demands that charges must be proved beyond reasonable doubt. The authority has pressed since 1991 for changes to the discipline system, including reduction in the standard of proof, and many of the changes are due to be implemented this April.

Critique the legal framework within which the PCA must work, and you would have our support. But to criticise us for working within the legal framework laid down by Parliament is unjustifiable.

Going East with the Bard

JANUARY IS traditionally the time for the annual family outing to see some Shakespeare. For anyone who has ever wondered why such trips often turn into fiascos of boredom and disappointment guaranteed to put children off the Bard for life, John Russell Brown's new book is a must.

Arguing that most British versions of his work "occupy only a part of the spectrum of what theatre can be", Russell Brown thinks that we have become used to viewing Shakespeare "through this distorting filter". To explore other ways of staging the Boring Bard, and to see what different theatrical traditions might offer, he goes East in search of enlightenment.

In Puri, south west of Calcutta, he sees a Jatra (touring) theatre; its performances start around midnight and end at 6.30am. In Bali, the exotic dance dramas that lit up Antonin Artaud's fevered mind in the Thirties



THURSDAY BOOK

NEW SITES FOR SHAKESPEARE: THEATRE, THE AUDIENCE AND ASIA
BY JOHN RUSSELL BROWN, ROUTLEDGE, £12.99

leave him cold, but he is captivated by a funeral procession and cremation ceremony. In China, he parleys with thespians; in Japan, he witnesses today's dramatists and directors using traditions without growing stale.

Russell Brown sounds as if he had a good time. In one Indian district, he comes across a group of three actors who give all-night shows lasting 12 hours. With only three actors? Not problem, comes the reply, because as many as 40 audience members come on stage and improvise parts. But how can you keep an audience's interest

for 12 hours? Well, try this apple wine and smoke the "leaves of a locally grown herb". School trips to the local rep were never this much fun.

Once, a power failure cut off electric lights for a show in Kerala, southern India, leaving the stage lit only by a low-level lamp. The result was an unexpected optical illusion in which the actors seemed to float in the dark, evoking a "dream-like state". Bye-bye naturalism, hello visionary theatre.

But is this just another case of cultural imperialism? One bored former associate director of the National Theatre roams the world, picking up tasty hints from faraway cultures, and brings them home to spice up the West's jaded palate? Definitely not. Russell Brown does not want to plunder Third World theatre and import its gems. He prefers to learn from it and see what its methods might do for our stage.

For example, India's Kutiyattam theatre, which is both highly contrived and extensively improvised, provokes thoughts about how today's Shakespeare tends to be rehearsed to death. While, in the Thirties, Stratford productions had a two- or three-week rehearsal period, today's rehearsals stretch over as many as eight weeks. Lack of rehearsal makes actors improvise more and take greater risks, with the result that their acting is more alive. Long rehearsals mean careful, subtle and original interpretations that may put audiences to sleep.

Nor is unprepared acting alien to the British tradition. In 1922, Harley Granville-Barker (the actor, director



Kurosawa's film 'Ran' adapted 'King Lear' to medieval Japan

and dramatist) argued against carefully prepared, long-running productions. The art of acting "may profit a little by failure, but what it cannot endure is the numbing monotony of success". Highly polished performances are related to good acting, he said, as reproductions are to an original Rembrandt.

Let's imagine such ideas applied to today's Royal Shakespeare Company. Instead of the director-led, long-rehearsal institution, we would have 10 smaller companies working as actors' collectives. Actors would quickly learn their words and improvise on stage. There would be a different show every night. All the pricey scenery would go on the scrap heap; all the costumes to the Theatre Museum. Everyday clothes and common props would be used; audiences would be encouraged to cheer on the action.

Not only does Russell Brown want to change actors; he also wants to change audiences. Drawing on his experience of open-air theatre in India,

he shows how spectators there treat actors like sporting heroes, calling out encouragement, advice and praise. Even in Kabuki, with its extraordinary artifice, star actors are greeted by name when they first arrive on stage. The best way to kill such lively audiences is to put them indoors in darkened halls.

The last part of *New Sites for Shakespeare* argues for complete reform of the way the British bard is performed. Neatly written and jargon-free, Russell Brown's polemic is one of the best books about Shakespeare because it dares to ask a basic question: what's the point of drama? Even if you don't agree with his opinions about the reconstructed Globe Theatre, or think his views on today's touring companies are a bit outdated, his passion, energy and longing for excitement command attention. But beware: this book may encourage you to abandon your yearly outing to the theatre, and go abroad instead.

ALEXIS STERZ

THURSDAY POEM

THE FAULTLINE
BY BERNARD O'DONOGHUE

When there's a sprinkle of snow
In mid-January, yet not enough
To stop it turning vein-translucent.
When young relationships freeze
And snap. When death, suddenly,
Crops up in the conversation
And no-one quite remembers
Who raised the subject. As far past
Solstice as November was before it;
No sign of spring, and no
Going back. All just serving
To show, in case we'd forgotten,
Our faultline: that we're designed
To live neither together nor alone.

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Brian Moore

A SLIGHT, lonesome-looking Irish gentleman, invariably photographed wearing a capacious mackintosh or tweed jacket and a quizzical smile: Brian Moore's modest appearance belied an achievement as boundless as his talent. His fan club extended from Graham Greene and Alfred Hitchcock to Christopher Ricks, Anita Brookner and Barry Humphries.

His 20 novels appeared at regular intervals, without any apparent fuss or strain, as though on some creative production line, and were all praised with a fulsome that became predictable. He won many prizes, was shortlisted for the Booker Prize three times, and saw five of his novels filmed. His imagination ranged freely across continents and time zones, from Thirties Belfast to modern New York and from France under Napoleon III to the Jesuits of 17th-century Quebec. And the main themes of his work, the concerns that spurred him again and again to write, were the largest and most problematic of all: virtue, conscience, faith and sin.

Despite regular publication, plaudits and prizes, Moore never quite achieved fame. Partly this was the result of location: he never lived in England, where his reputation was highest, and was never part of the literary establishment there or in America. But he was an outsider by temperament. Uniquely among established writers, he would not accept cash advances for his work, saying, "They make you a kind of indentured servant to the publisher. If a book isn't working, I like to be able to throw it away." Nor would he have any truck with modern trends such as the walk-on part for the author ("I'm not the sort of writer who can afford flourishes. I don't want the reader to hear or see me").

the IRA. The young Brian thus had patriotism to a united Ireland, and the Catholic's fear of Hell, injected in his bloodstream from an early age. Neither quite converted him. He remained ambivalent about his beliefs: "I felt tremendous guilt when I was very young," he once said, "because I was always convinced I had made a bad First Confession."

Moore lost his faith, partly as a way of circumventing his terror of damnation, but remained fascinated by the numinous and the power of faith. He admired those who believed strongly in things, even if they were demonstrably wrong. His books are full of passionately held beliefs, and equally passionate rejections of faith - in *Catholics* (1972), he memorably portrayed the mind of an elderly friar who tries to save a religious order from extinction even as his own faith dwindles to nothing.

He joined the war effort as a civilian (his father would have been incensed had he joined the British army), working in the British Ministry of War Transport, and later spent two years with the UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, distributing supplies in Warsaw. He was present at the trial of Rudolf

London firm of André Deutsch in 1954. Laurie Lee, the poet and future author of *Cider With Rosie*, considered it offensive because of a scene in a lavatory, but the editor Diana Athill recognised its qualities and recommended Deutsch buy it. It was published in 1955, was reviewed with instant enthusiasm and won the Author's Club prize for a first novel.

A bleak tale about a lonely alcoholic Belfast spivier, the germ of the book was a stray remark made by Mrs Keogh, one of Moore's mother's lame-duck single friends: she had been engaged just once, and used to refer to "my brother-in-law that would have been". The poignancy of the remark triggered some creative empathy in Moore that would be replicated in further novels of women suffering a loss of faith or a disastrous impulse towards carnal love (*O Am Mary Dunne*, 1968; *The Temptation of Eileen Hughes*, 1981).

Religion, sex and an Irish background constantly recurred in Moore's work. He had a virtual fetish about writing in the voice, and the skin, of a woman. He defended it lightly, saying, "If I write as a woman, I can do all the autobiographical stuff without getting picked up on it," but the regularity with which he performed this transgender ventriloquism suggests a deeply serious engagement with female emotional responses. The charting of a doomed modern love affair, in *The Doctor's Wife*, filled with off-puttingly clinical sexual encounters, marked perhaps the low-point of these explorations, although the book was shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 1976.

Moore moved to New York in the early Sixties. His marriage broke up and, in 1966, he moved to California with his second wife, Jean Denney, to whom many of his novels are devotedly inscribed. They settled in Malibu, and spent holidays in a firelined, ocean-overlooking retreat in Nova Scotia, her family's home.

The condition of home and exile, especially Irish exile, informed many of his books, most notably *The Luck of Ginger Coffey* (1960), which was filmed with Robert Shaw and Mary Ure. Two decades later *The Morgan Inheritance* (1979) featured a reverse journey, with an American writer searching for his Irish roots, and a foothold in literary history through kinship with the poet James Clarence Mangan.

One, perhaps surprising, influence on Moore's work was the movie director Alfred Hitchcock. Educated by Jesuits, and just as religion-haunted as Moore, Hitchcock was impressed by the "cold eroticism" of *The Feast of Lupercal* (1956), in which a nervous schoolteacher spends an innocent night with a young girl. He liked the way Moore got inside women's heads, and signed him up to imagine how the wives of famous modern spies might react to their defection. The result



A writer who combined effortless story-telling with moral questioning

Alan Macdonald

ALAN MACDONALD was one of the pioneers of BBC global television news. He was a tireless champion of BBC World, the BBC's international 24-hour news and information channel.

Today, BBC World is watched in nearly 60 million homes in 187 countries, and CNN's supremacy has been challenged. Macdonald held a passionate belief that it was the BBC's duty to create a television news channel to match the excellence of BBC World Service radio. In 1986, he left his job as political correspondent at the World Service to take the first tentative steps.

In those early pioneering days, when CNN ruled in the global news village, Macdonald and his colleagues found much opposition, and innumerable obstacles. Many BBC executives did not share his enthusiasm for the venture. Funding was a fraught subject as neither the licence fee nor the World Service grant-in-aid was available. The commercial route was taken, and the BBC's global television news service was developed by the commercial division of the BBC. There were concerns too over standards: how could a commercially funded news channel maintain BBC standards?

Alan Macdonald was at the forefront of the launch in 1991 and subsequent development of BBC World Service Television (now BBC World), the BBC's first international satellite television channel. He became Head of Business Development and Regional Director, South Asia and the Middle East, and established partnerships and distribution arrangements as the channel spread throughout the world. Now, there is scarcely a continent or country where the BBC World signal is not available.

Macdonald's background in the world's most respected radio service was useful in his new role. But he knew only too well that, no matter how strong the brand, tougher rules apply in the commercial market for news: markets do not suddenly appear when satellite signals are beamed; each territory is fought for, against both established and growing competition; and each territory won must cover its costs. If the BBC can succeed with BBC World today, it will be because of the early work done by people like Macdonald.

Those who watched him at work in India, Taiwan, Hong Kong, the Middle East and elsewhere, saw him combine an understanding of the commercial realities with an admirable personal code. He believed in establishing long-standing relationships based on trust, and many of his business partners became friends.

Alan Macdonald cut a distinctive figure among the younger media men of today - tall (he towered above most people), old-fashioned in manner and mode, a little eccentric (he was one of the few BBC executives who rode a motor-bike), imaginative and amusing.

He was born in 1945 and educated at Whitgift School, Croydon. He went on to read Chinese, Economics and Sociology at Leeds University, after spending a year as a teacher in Malaysia working with the British aid organisation Voluntary Service Overseas. From 1966 he worked as a regional newspaper reporter before joining BBC World Service as an international journalist.

He joined External Services News, as it was then, in March 1972 and held a number of positions - notably duty editor, specialist correspondent, assistant intake editor and Newsroom assistant editor. He travelled to many parts of the world as a foreign correspondent, and worked in London as the BBC World Service political correspondent during the early years of the Thatcher government.

Even serious illness (he was diagnosed with a brain tumour a year ago) didn't dampen his spirit nor stop him. It was characteristic of Macdonald that he turned aside all advice to stay away from work. He believed he had a personal duty to the BBC, and he did his duty until the end of his life.



A little eccentric for the BBC

Macdonald was an active supporter of the Downs Syndrome Association and played a major part in the early 1980s campaign to curb the use of the term "mongol".

BOB WHEATON

Alan Neil Macdonald, journalist and television executive: born London, 24 April 1945; married 1969; Janice Clark (two sons, two daughters); died London 9 January 1999.

'I'm not the sort of writer who can afford flourishes. I don't want the reader to hear or see me'

Höss, the notorious commandant of Auschwitz, watched as witnesses went up to spit in Höss's face, and never forgot the final interchange. The judge said, "You are responsible for the death of at least a million people. What have you to say for yourself?" Höss looked at the court. "I am a German officer," he replied proudly. "I obeyed my orders."

Moore left Belfast, he said, to spare his parents the spectacle of seeing him refuse to attend Mass on Sundays. But it was the pursuit of a woman 10 years his senior that brought him across the Atlantic to Canada in 1948. The object of his affections turned him down, but he stuck around, became a journalist on the *Montreal Gazette*, and started to write. He married his first wife, Jacqueline Scully, a French-Canadian, in 1952.

His first books were written under the nom de plume of Michael Bryan. The first published under his real name was *The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne*. It had been rejected by 10 American publishers when it came into the offices of the

notorious commandant of Auschwitz, watched as witnesses went up to spit in Höss's face, and never forgot the final interchange. The judge said, "You are responsible for the death of at least a million people. What have you to say for yourself?" Höss looked at the court. "I am a German officer," he replied proudly. "I obeyed my orders."

Moore left Belfast, he said, to spare his parents the spectacle of seeing him refuse to attend Mass on Sundays. But it was the pursuit of a woman 10 years his senior that brought him across the Atlantic to Canada in 1948. The object of his affections turned him down, but he stuck around, became a journalist on the *Montreal Gazette*, and started to write. He married his first wife, Jacqueline Scully, a French-Canadian, in 1952.

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Professor Valerie Pitt

VALERIE PITT was one of the most astute, perceptive, entertaining, and, when she wanted to be - which was much of the time - devastating figures of the late-20th-century Church of England, a church with which she had a long and turbulent relationship of disloyal faithfulness. Drawn to Anglicanism by its theological potential rather than its culture, she once wrote that its spiritual life was "carefully insulated from the world in which coal is mined and lemon meringue pie is made... Betjeman is only too justly its poet."

Her theological position is perhaps best described as one of "radical orthodoxy", a term which only came into fashion in Cambridge as she was dying. Her theological and spiritual mentors were Austin Farrer, Gordon Phillips, Michael Ramsey, and her dear friend Percy Coleman who had been her confessor for over 50 years.

Born in 1925 in Peckham, the eldest of six children, Valerie Pitt was

part of a working-class family with strong socialist convictions. One of her grandfathers was active in the Amalgamated Engineering Union, while the other helped to lead the Bakers Union and addressed the bakers' strike in Trafalgar Square in 1913.

After school in Camberwell, she went to St Hugh's College, Oxford, in 1943 to read English; and there, having been secretary of the Socratic Society, she was received into the Anglican Church. Her BLitt dissertation was on the roots of Shelley's philosophy, and she wrote her only major published work, on Lord Tennyson, *Tennyson Laureate* (1962).

After four years lecturing at Cardiff, in 1953 she became a Fellow of Newnham College, Cambridge, but in 1958 returned to London, where she became a lecturer at Woolwich Polytechnic, an institution which was to be her academic home, under its various identities as Thames Polytechnic and the University of Greenwich, for almost 30 years. She was head of the Depart-



'I shall now leave the church'

ment of Liberal Studies and later of the School of Humanities, becoming one of the first "polytechnic professors" shortly after her retirement.

It was the 1950s monthly journal *Prism*, the organ of a new breed of progressive Anglo-Catholics, sometimes called the "angry young An-

glicans", which made Valerie Pitt's name well-known in radical church circles. Her *Prism* pamphlet *The Church Communion for England* (1967) was one of the earliest critiques of that curious body, while her satirical reflection on the cliché-ridden and patronising style of the 1968 Lambeth Conference, published in November 1968, is still relevant today.

In 1965 she was elected to the Church Assembly (the precursor of the General Synod), where, on 29 June 1967, she introduced a resolution calling for the admission of women to holy orders, a critical resolution which was not to see its fulfilment for many years. Her spontaneous speeches were awaited with delight and anticipation in that somewhat dreary body.

On one occasion when the late Gertrude Duffield, a right-wing evangelist, was warning of the existence of a sinister and "well-organised faction" which was seeking to bring about disestablishment, Valerie Pitt arose and asked for the name and

address of the secretary so she could join it. It was in fact as a result of her membership of the commission on church and state (the Chadwick Commission) of 1970 that she became widely known in the Church. Her "memorandum of dissent", in which she argued the case for disestablishment, remains one of the formative documents in this continuing debate.

She could be a formidable member of any audience. On one occasion, in a south London church where a clergyman was using his sermon to defend the British nuclear deterrent, she suddenly rose, and announced to the electrified congregation: "Reverend Father, I do not propose to stay in this church and witness the misuse of this Christian pulpit for the promotion of militarism. I shall now leave the church, and the churchwardens will kindly inform me when the Mass resumes." The preacher was so taken aback that he lost the thread of his sermon and retired in confusion as

Pitt was escorted back to her pew.

She was deeply hurt by the behaviour of some of the overseas bishops at the Lambeth Conference of 1998 and wrote a letter to the *Church Times*, asking "Can I myself - could any decent person - remain in the kind of church that [was] displayed to us? Do I want to?" Yet Valerie Pitt remained a woman of profound Christian faith, even if increasingly disenchanted with what she took to be the trivialising, the shallowness and the lack of serious thinking and debate in the Church of England.

KENNETH LEECH

Valerie Joan Pitt, English scholar: born London 14 February 1925; *Fellow, Newnham College, Cambridge* 1953-58; *Lecturer in Humanities, Woolwich Polytechnic* (from 1970 *Thames Polytechnic*) 1958-62, *Senior Lecturer* 1962-66, *Principal Lecturer* in charge of Humanities 1966-71, *Head, School of Humanities* 1971-86, *Professor* 1987; died London 4 January 1999.

Goro Yamaguchi

THE BAMBOO flute is central to Japanese traditional music. It is played vertically, with a notched mouthpiece and five finger holes - four equidistant on top and an upper one at the back for the thumb.

It is called a *shakuhachi*, a name derived from the native measuring units defining the instrument's standard length, one *shaku* and eight *hachi*, a total of 54.5 centimetres. It is made only from a certain type of bamboo, the *mandake* (*Phyllostachya bambusoides*) which is sliced off near the root to create the swelling "bell" at the base. The inner bore is lacquered. There is no reed.

One of the great modern masters

of the *shakuhachi* was Goro Yamaguchi, who was born into a family of traditional musicians. His mother played the *koto* and the *shamisen*, and his father, Shiro Yamaguchi, was a leading virtuoso performer on the *shakuhachi*. He gave Goro his first lessons at the rather late age of 11.

His son showed such an amazing gift for the instrument and made such rapid progress that he was able to give his first concert at the age of 13, in 1947. This was despite the fact that the instrument is considered the most difficult to master. It takes a long time to acquire the characteristic head-shaking that produces its haunting mystical tones, its almost

ethereal voice, half-human, half-animal, that sends shivers up and down the spine. Just to be able to produce a sound takes long practice.

The bamboo flute had come to Japan, like so much else, from China in the late seventh century and was included in Japanese court orchestras (*gogaku*) until the end of the ninth century. From the early 16th century it was associated with the Fuke sect of Zen Buddhism. The playing of the *shakuhachi* was regarded as a spiritual discipline by the priests and a source of enlightenment for the listeners.

The Zen religious practice has endured to the present day, but the

bamboo flute has become secularised and is now often heard to sublime effect in works by contemporary composers both Japanese and Western. It has also gained popularity with classic jazz musicians. It is a musical feature of many *chambers* or *samurai sword-fight* movies in which it is sometimes used as a weapon of a non-lethal nature. The *shakuhachi* was used in Minoru Miki's kabuki opera *An Actor's Revenge* (for which I wrote the libretto) when it was performed by the English Music Theatre at the Old Vic season in 1979.

Goro Yamaguchi's renowned albums of traditional music include the

1968 Zen meditation music for the Nonesuch Explorer series, "A Bell Ringing in Empty Sky", the first widely commercialised Western recording of the *shakuhachi* repertoire, which attracted many Western fans, some of whom took up the instrument and even went to Japan to find teachers and, in exceptional cases, to receive instruction from the master himself. Some of those foreign performers are now stars in Japan and there are even groups of Western *shakuhachi* players.

In 1977, music from the album was included with work by the great composers of Western culture in a

selection of Earth's music rocketed into space by NASA's *Voyager 2*.

In 1992 Yamaguchi was designated a "living national treasure" (*ningen kofu*). He was also a sensitive teacher, and in the United States was the first visiting Artist in Residence to honour Wesleyan University's programme of classical Japanese music.

JAMES KIRKUP

Goro Yamaguchi, *shakuhachi* player: born Tokyo 1933; married (two daughters); died Tokyo 3 January 1999.



A little eccentric for the BBC

Macdonald was an active supporter of the Downs Syndrome Association and played a major part in the early 1980s campaign to curb the use of the term "mongol".

BOB WHEATON

Alan Neil Macdonald, journalist and television executive: born London, 24 April 1945; married 1969; Janice Clark (two sons, two daughters); died London 9 January 1999.

BIRTH
MARRIAGE
& DEATH

DEATH

TOMLINSON born 1925; died suddenly at home 1989 aged 59; FL, Worcester Crematorium, at 11am; Liza, daughter, sister and

ROYAL
ENGAGEMENT

The Princess Royal's 16th birthday party at the Institution, London. The Princess, 16, attended a Neighborhood Partnership Luncheon at the Palace, London, as Patron, British Foundation, attended a Members Reception at James's Palace.

CHANGING OF THE
The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment in Queen's Life Guard at Guards, 11am.

Jim Peters

IF THE "Mile of the Century" between Britain's Roger Bannister and Australia's John Landy was the most talked-of race in track and field history before its running on 7 August 1954 at the Empire Games in Vancouver, the marathon that had begun two hours earlier on the same afternoon was to become, thanks to Jim Peters, the stuff of athletics legend.

Bannister, who had run his four-minute mile earlier in the same year, did not disappoint his admirers and duly beat his great rival Landy in a truly memorable race. Barely 20 minutes later, as the temperature in the non-existent shade rose to 75F against the rather incongruous backdrop of the snow-capped Grouse Mountains, the 35-year-old Peters, favourite for the marathon gold medal, entered the sun-drenched arena, weaving and swaying from side to side.

Sixteen men had begun the race but only six were to return. Peters, along with his countryman Stan Cox, took an early lead, passing the five-mile mark in 28min 15sec. The race wore on up the steep Kingsway and through the Vancouver streets, deserted thanks to viewers watching on television or in the stadium, but before long it was plain that all was not well. Peters passed the 20-mile post in 1hr 48min but Cox, by now about 400 yards behind, was beginning to feel the effects of sunstroke.

There was a heat haze over the roads and the melting tarmac began sticking to his rubber-soled shoes. Just before the 25-mile mark Cox became so groggy he crashed into a lamp-post but when he heard that Bannister had won the mile he got up and ran another 100 yards before the police led him away to a nearby ambulance.

Peters, who had set a new world record earlier that year and had covered more than 5,000 miles in training, struggled up the last two hills but arrived at the stadium gates in a dangerously dehydrated condition with the last 385 yards around the track to run. Staggering and clawing his way along on all fours and falling at least six times, he took 11 minutes to cover the last 200 yards.

Bannister, along with others at the track-side, could only watch, as they knew any attempt to assist Peters would disqualify him. Eventually, though, after crossing the photo-finish line nearly 200 yards short of the actual

finish line, he could go no further and with arms and legs still going through the motions of running he was carried off to hospital to join Cox, who was fighting for his life.

Peters spent the next seven hours in an oxygen tent during which time no less than half a gallon of saline solution and dextrose was fed into him intravenously. As the treatment took effect, the two men began to recover. Joe McGhee, meanwhile, an RAF officer from Scotland, had fallen over five times during the race and called for an ambulance, but when he heard that Peters and Cox were out of the race he got up and finished the course to win.

The psychological and physical reactions Peters suffered were so marked that he was advised by doctors to retire from athletics and he never ran again, although he always maintained he was robbed of the gold medal in Vancouver as the course was longer than the regulation 26 miles 385 yards.

Those appeals fell on deaf ears, but the Duke of Edinburgh awarded him an honorary gold medal on Christmas Eve of the same year for his gallantry, and

Staggering and clawing his way along on all fours, he took 11 minutes to cover 200 yards



Peters reaches the end of his Empire Games marathon, Vancouver, 1954

last year, to mark his 80th birthday. Peters was proud to receive the Duke's gold medals once again.

Born in Homerton, east London, but raised in Becontree in Essex, Peters was a useful schoolboy cricketer and footballer before taking up athletics. The outbreak of the Second World War interrupted his progress. Peters joining the RAMC, but afterwards, and by now a qualified optician, he returned to running, although he was disappointed to finish only ninth in the 10,000m at the 1948 Olympics in London.

Approaching the age of 30, he was tempted to retire, but his coach persuaded him to take up marathon run-

ning and engaged him in a series of innovative training techniques focusing on speed and strength routines. In 1952 he set the first of four world records for the distance with a time of 2:20:42.2 but failed to finish at the Helsinki Olympics owing to cramp.

The following year, however, with a running style that grew more and more exaggerated and led at times to blood seeping from his torso as his thumb-nail tore into his vest, he set two more world records and won four of the world's largest marathon races. Then, on 26 June the following year, with a time of 2:17:39.4 in the Polytechnic Marathon from Windsor to Chiswick, Peters

became the first man to run under 2hr 20min for the marathon.

In his later years Peters remained in touch with his club Essex Beagles and was a Rotary Club member near his home in Thorpe Bay in Essex. Prior to his death he had been fighting cancer for six years, and of those who witnessed his heroics in Vancouver or were among the millions to see it later on Movietone News, few would have been surprised that his final battle lasted so long.

ADAM SZRETER

James Peters, runner: born London 24 October 1918; married (one son, one daughter); died 9 January 1999.

Fabrizio De André

FABRIZIO DE ANDRÉ was the anarchist son of a wealthy industrialist, a native of Genoa who preferred Sardinia, and a singer-songwriter who was very sparing with his words: "I write songs and I speak," De André pointed out, whenever he came under pressure to do either of these things, "only if I have something to say."

In a musical career spanning 35 years, he came up with enough to fill only 19 LPs, including "best of" and live recordings. What he said, however, moved generations of young Italians, and had a profound effect on the nation's song-writing tradition.

With his jowly, deeply lined face, constantly half-obscured by smoke from a never-ending string of cigarettes, De André would not have looked out of place as a night-club crooner. But his intense, mesmerising ballads – of the outcast and downcast, of war and religion, of the inequities of power and capitalist might –

would have jarred in that atmosphere. Besides, such close and regular contact with the public would have been hell for this very private performer. "For years, I couldn't even get up on a stage without drinking a litre of whisky to steady myself beforehand," he confessed.

Yet music was the driving force in the life of De André who, as a teenager in the 1950s, would hawk his compositions around record producers in Milan. In 1968, at the age of 18, his first single "Nuovo barocco" ("Baroque Clouds") was released, sinking more or less without trace. He limped from medical studies to humanities and then law, playing his guitar in small-time Genoese bands and writing songs. Then in 1965, he penned "La canzone di Marinella" ("Marinella's Song"), which was recorded by the female singing star Mina. With £600,000 of royalties in his pocket, De André ditched university, and launched himself into a full-time musical career.

Unlike other popular political singer-songwriters of the 1960s and 1970s, De André made no secret of his intellectual leanings. "Tutti morimmo a stento" ("We All Died of Hardship", 1968) was a homage to the French poet Louis Villon, the album *Non al denaro, né all'amore né al cielo* ("Not For Money or Love or the Sky", 1971) was inspired by Edgar Lee Master's *Spoon River Anthology*, and *Nuvole* ("Clouds", 1990) drew on Aristophanes.

His fascination with folk traditions led him to blend Sardinian and native American music in his 1981 album *Fabrizio De André*. The musician David Byrne was deeply impressed – and influenced – by his *Creusa de m'a* ("Mule Track by the Sea", 1984), songs inspired by Mediterranean culture and sung in Genoese dialect, which pre-dated the World Music boom.

Ever a champion of the underdog, De André sang his support for gypsies, sui-

cide cases and illegal immigrants. He lambasted hypocritical clients of prostitution, and the death penalty. And, for a while, he sympathised with bandits in his adopted home in Sardinia. Until, that is, they kidnapped him and his wife Dori Ghezzi in 1978, keeping them chained to a tree in the island's desolate heartlands for four months. The irony of the *anarchista buono* (the good anarchist) being ransomed for £600m – a vast sum at the time – by his wealthy capitalist of a father was lost on no one. De André, however, shrugged it off, and characteristically, turned the experience into "Hotel Supramonte", one of his best-loved works.

ANNE HANLEY

Fabrizio De André, singer-songwriter: born Genoa, Italy 18 February 1940; married Dori Ghezzi (one son, one daughter); died Milan 11 January 1999.

County court's contempt jurisdiction

A COUNTY court judge had jurisdiction to initiate proceedings for contempt of court of his own motion in breach of a contact order in family proceedings.

The Court of Appeal allowed the appeal of a mother against the dismissal of her application to strike out committal proceedings for contempt of court initiated by the judge of his own motion in respect of her breach of an order for contact between her children and their father.

The judge had taken the view that, although the father was not contemplating taking steps to commit the mother for being in breach of the order, it was his responsibility to ensure that the issue be tried. He had himself drafted particulars of the breach, and a notice was drawn "upon the direction of the court of its own motion" that the mother show cause why she should not be found to be in breach in failing to hand the children over "in a fit and proper state to have contact with the father".

The mother applied to strike out the notice on the grounds that it was not within the proper exercise of judicial power or discretion for a judge to issue such a notice of his own motion and/or that the matters complained of could not amount to contempt of court.

The judge dismissed that application. Leave to appeal was granted and the committal proceedings were stayed.

On the appeal, the following issues arose:

1) whether the judge had power to initiate committal proceedings of his own motion;

THURSDAY LAW REPORT 14 JANUARY 1999

M (a minor)
Court of Appeal
(Lord Justice Evans
and Lord Justice Ward)
16 December 1998

If so, how that power should be exercised, and whether the judge had been in error in the instant case.

Dennis Sharpe for the mother; the father in person; Alice Robinson (instructed by the Attorney General) as amicus curiae.

Lord Justice Ward said that the judge had had jurisdiction to act of his own motion. Pursuant to section 38 of the County Courts Act 1984, the circuit judge might make any order which could be made in the High Court if the proceedings were in the High Court.

There was no doubt that the High Court had power to make an order of committal of its own motion when the contempt was committed in the face of the court. Further, RSC Order 52, rule 5 was wide enough to apply to the present case had it been in the High Court and, by virtue of section 38 of the 1984 Act, it applied in the county court as well.

In the case of civil contempt the court had to bear in mind the extent to which knowledge of the breach had become a

matter of public concern, amounting to scandal capable of diminishing the authority of the court such as might lead to an increased flouting of its orders, and also the extent to which some interest other than that of the litigant was in need of protection.

The contempt had to be clear as well as flagrant. Pursuing a committal *ex mero motu* was a highly exceptional course to follow, particularly in family cases. The judge should always take time to pause for reflection, and should give an opportunity for the Official Solicitor to be invited to represent the child, or to report on the child's position. If the Official Solicitor saw a potential conflict, but the contempt was none the less clear and flagrant, there was no reason why the Attorney General should not be asked to prosecute the committal as *amicus curiae*.

All remedies should be exhausted before the weapon of committal was wielded. The danger in initiating a committal did not seek was that the judge was at risk of being seen to be acting to preserve his own dignity and to punish for the affront to him. That would distort the justification for the condign power of committal, which existed only to serve the ends of justice.

In the instant case the judge had misdirected himself and was wrong to have proceeded on his own motion, and the committal application would accordingly be struck out.

KATE O'HANLON,
Barrister

GAZETTE

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

DEATHS

TOMLINSON: Lucy Margaret, died suddenly at home 7 January 1999 aged 58. Funeral at Worcester Crematorium, 21 January, at 11am. Loving mother, daughter, sister and friend.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Princess Royal presents Worcester's 19th Anniversary Business Awards at the Royal Institution, London W1; as President of the Patrons, Crime Concern, attends a Neighbourhood Safety Partnership Luncheon at Claridge's Hotel, London W1; and, as Patron, British Quality Foundation, attends a Founder Members Reception at St James's Palace.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

FORTHCOMING MARRIAGES

Mr D. W. de Vos and Miss S. L. Pullen. The engagement is announced between Dirk, son of Mr W. de Vos, of Johannesburg, South Africa, and Mrs A. de Vos, of Cape Town, and Samantha, daughter of the late Mr Lester Pullen and of Mrs Angela Pullen, of Nassau, Bahamas.

BIRTHDAYS

Captain Sir Alastair Aird, Comptroller to the Queen Mother, 68; Professor Sir Melville Arnott, cardiologist, 90; Mr Peter Barkworth, actor, 70; Miss Carol Bellamy, executive director of Unicef, 57; Mr Richard Briers, actor, 65; Baroness Brooke of Ystradfellte, former Vice-Chairman, Conservative Party, 91; Lady Byford, former President, Conservative and Unionist Association, 58; Lord Catto, president, Morgan Grenfell, 76; Miss Paye Dunaway, actress, 58; Mr Michael Foster MP, 35; Miss Maina

Gielgud, ballerina, 54; Miss Andrée Grenfell, former managing director, Glenby International, 59; Sir Brian Hardie, cricketer, 49; Sir Martin Holdgate, President, Zoological Society of London, 69; Mr Jack Jones, singer, 61; Professor Sir Hans Kornberg, former Master of Christ's College, Cambridge, 71; Mr John Lever, Headmaster, Canford School, 47; Mr Warren Mitchell, actor, 73; Mr Trevor Nunn, theatre director, 59; Sir Neil Pritchard, former ambassador to Thailand, 88; Sir Vernon Scoble, chairman, Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust, 71; Mlle Caterina Valente, guitarist and singer, 68; Mr Bill Werbernick, snooker player, 43; Sir John Woodcock, former HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, 67; Mr Roger Young, chief executive, Scottish Hydro-Electric, 55.

ANNIVERSARIES

Births: Benedict Arnold, soldier and traitor, 1741; Dr Albert Schweitzer, missionary surgeon, 1875; Hugh Lofting, writer, 1886; Hal

Rosch, film producer and director, 1893; Sir Cecil Walter Hardy Beaton, photographer and stage designer, 1904. Deaths: Edmund Halley, astronomer, 1742; Lewis Carroll (Charles Lutwidge Dodgson), writer, 1898; Humphrey DeForest Bogart, actor, 1957; Anais Nin, writer and poetess, 1977. On this day: The Great Frost Fair began on the Thames, 1205; the law requiring motorists to wear seat-belts was made permanent, 1986. Today is the Feast Day of St Antony Pucci, St Barbassamas or Barbascemin, St Datus, St Felix of Nola, St Kenigern or Mungo, St Macrina the Elder, The Martyrs of Mount Sinai and St Sava.

LECTURES

National Gallery: Colin Wiggins, "Portraits (ii): Van Dyck, Equestrian Portrait of Charles I", 1pm. Victoria and Albert Museum: Sarah Bowles, "Rococo and the Decorative Arts", 2pm. National Portrait Gallery: Liza Vaughan-Hughes, "A Golden Quill: a programme

to mark the quatercentenary of the death of Edmund Spenser", 1.10pm. British Museum: Timothy Clark, "Harunobu and the Birth of the Japanese Colour Print", 11.30am. Wallace Collection, London W1: Patricia Falkner, "Dutch Paintings", 1pm.

LEONARD CHESHIRE

Lord Putnam delivered the Leonard Cheshire Lecture yesterday at the Stationers' Hall, London EC4. His subject was "Inclusion or Exclusion? – disabled people in tomorrow's society". Mr Jonathan Dimbleby and Sir David Goodall, Chairman of Leonard Cheshire (the Leonard Cheshire Foundation), also spoke. Among those attending were: Sir Patrick Walker, Leonard Cheshire International Chairman; Mr Bryan Dalton, Director General, Leonard Cheshire; Mr Ronald Travers, Leonard Cheshire Golden Jubilee Chairman; Mr David Grayson, Chairman of the National Disability Council; Mr Richard Gutch, Chief Executive, Artistic Care; Mr Bert Massey, Director, Radar; Mr Bill McClellan, Chairman, UKICA; The Hon Sir Peter Ramsbotham; Ms Sue Sayce, Chief Executive, United Response; Mr James Strachan, Chief Executive, RNID.

AMONG THE well-read, breasts always arouse thoughts of an eminent Powell – not the novelist or the late politician, but the Supreme Court justice whose name was used for them by Gore Vidal in *Myron* (1975). It was a protest against censorship. Those two full syllables were well chosen. Meanwhile, Myra

WORDS CHRISTOPHER HAWTREE reinquist, n.

wakes to find that Myron "has not only removed the delicate honeypot of every real American boy's dream but replaced it with A

Thing! A ghastly long thick tubular object... This reinquist has got to go!" In 1987, Vidal replaced it with "cock" – less prescient than usual, for this crony of Nixon and Reagan, William Reinquist, is now Chief Justice: such is destiny, his star's progress, that he deliberates over President Clinton's errant reinquist.

A high-contrast, black and white photograph of a protest. In the foreground, a man holds a large sign that reads "SALMAN RUSHDIE" with a skull and crossbones. Other protesters are visible in the background, some holding signs, including one that says "NO AG AG AG". The image is grainy and has a stark, high-contrast aesthetic.

... If my friends are
to p by kisses on the ch
eve kisses on the lips ar
therm, though I have to
whn it comes to lips
avert my mouth at the last
like a baby when you try to
a hal mouthful of food.
yet Lips no. (Secretly as an
Englishman, hands hake
mine.)

ut, as far as men go, prob
average state of play at the r
is vat fathers and sons hug
gloving men and close
shaking men are all
on special occasions,
funerals or weddings. But r
observing how men reac
the meet has thrown up
werly different behaviour

There's the slap on the sh
there's the whack on the b
even a bit of hair-mussing.
a tremendously peculiar ge

It is every parent's nightmare to lose a child. Geneviève Jurgensen lost two in a car crash. How did she cope? By Louise France

'I know I will never recover'

The French newspaper headline is brutally informative: 50 people die on roads in France on New Year's Eve, it says. Geneviève Jurgensen, a 52-year-old journalist and author, rolls her eyes heavenwards. A pensive, well-dressed woman, sitting in her elegant high-ceilinged apartment in Paris, she's all too familiar with the statistics. Nineteen years ago her daughters, Mathilde and Elise, were killed on a French road. They were seven and four. They lost their lives before they'd lost more than two milk teeth.

In Britain there are 3,500 deaths on the roads annually. In France the figure is 9,000. Geneviève Jurgensen knows precisely how the families of the new year fatalities will be feeling. For them there will be, she says, with a sad shrug of her shoulders, "hell and flames".

Eleven years after her daughters died, Geneviève Jurgensen started writing a

'My first thought was, this is beyond human strength. This is beyond what I can face'

book about Mathilde and Elise and how she and her husband, Laurent, survived their deaths. Lucid, moving and beautifully written, *The Disappearance* was a best-seller in France and has just been published in Britain.

She smiles, and says she would prefer to talk about something else. "I love to laugh," she says, "I am, naturally, a happy person. I'd much rather talk about Shakespeare and poetry. But now I know – and perhaps it took writing this book to admit it – that whatever happens to me is related to my children's deaths. I have abandoned the idea that one day I will recover. This is now how I understand life."

On 30 April 1980 her daughters were being driven to see their paternal grandmother by Geneviève's sister-in-law and her husband, Aline and Christian. The couple's baby sat between the two sisters in the back seat. A 22-year-old Belgian, who had been drinking, overtook them and rammed into the side of the car. Aline controlled the vehicle and brought it to a halt on the hard shoulder, only to find that the collision had catapulted Mathilde and Elise out of the open window. They were already dead when Christian found them, metres apart on the tarmac.

That night when the telephone rang, her mother thought nothing of it. She was absent-mindedly glancing at herself in the mirror when she heard that her two children, her only children, had been killed. Softly, she shut the girls' bedroom door. No one expects their children to die before they do. Least of all do parents expect to have their whole family wiped out. "My first thought was, this is beyond human strength," she says now. "This is beyond what I can face."

People said that one day she would write about it, but for 10 years she was repulsed by the idea. "Writing would have been a way of mastering the pain and I didn't want that. I loved them so much I didn't want the pain to fade."

But in 1991, when a friend who hadn't



met her daughters asked her about them, she sensed in him a humanity to which she responded. They agreed that she should write him letters about the lives of Mathilde and Elise, the things they said, how their characters were beginning to form, the way she buttoned up their red and blue raincoats on the day she saw them for the last time. Letters, too, about their deaths, and about the "hell and flames" that came afterwards. She wrote the letters when she felt like it, in longhand and on whatever notepaper came to hand. Her friend did not reply but he treasured each one and when, two years later, he remarked that they had begun to sound more like a diary than an exploration of mourning, they decided that it was time to stop. These letters became the basis for her book.

Almost a year to the day after the tragedy – with "unspeakable luck" as she puts it – she gave birth to her third daughter, Elvire. Later another child came along, a boy. Elvire is 17 now; her brother, Gauthier, is 14. Without them it is too awful to speculate where Geneviève would be today. With them, she is remarkably articulate on life touched by death.

"The first year is the worst," she says. "You go through each of the four seasons remembering what you were doing the year before." She saw her children's faces wherever she went. She would bellow Mathilde's name just to hear the very sound of it again. She would look at teenagers in wonderment and ask herself how their mothers had been able to keep them alive.



Geneviève Jurgensen: 'The first year is the worst.' Above, the daughters she'll never forget, Elise, left, and Mathilde



Akshar Miller

Feverishly, she says, she read every letter of condolence. For people who were too embarrassed to approach the couple, she has only scorn. The parent of one of her daughter's classmates would stand behind her in the queue at the baker's but never spoke to her again – "It was more important for her not to look foolish than to go out to a mother who no longer had any children." It still angers her.

Robbed of their roles as mother and fa-

ther, the Jurgensens discovered that they now needed to be parented. "We relied on friends, who would say, 'You're coming with us to the theatre tonight'. Or, 'No, you can't go home alone.' One of the worst aspects was the feeling that people put them on a pedestal. "We were like statues, honoured for our bravery. Yet we felt so alone. We needed people to be themselves and yet they could not be."

Faced with such devastation many re-

lationships would have collapsed, but the marriage has remained strong. Laurent and Geneviève met in their early twenties – "It was love at first sight" – and it was the desperate desire to return to the happiness they had known with their young family that sustained them in the early Eighties. "Both of us were conscious that we would have preferred it if one of us had died rather than the girls... But we had been very happy, and happy people are better equipped to start again. We were desperate to have children and find the same happiness again. Making love when you want another child is close to instinct. We would turn to each other frantically, clinging to one another."

Geneviève needs people to know what she is feeling, whether she is happy or sad. Laurent, an architect, is more private (though pleased that his daughters were being remembered by his wife's book he was acutely apprehensive about the exposure). But they instinctively agreed about the way to mourn – "without restraint" as she puts it – and this bond sustained them. "Although you have to remember that your sorrow is not the only one. You live with someone who is sad too."

She is still lost for words to describe her feelings about the man who drove the car that caused the accident. He was fined, but allowed to keep his licence. In 1983 Geneviève set up a pressure group with another mother who had lost her daughter in a traffic accident. Drink-driving and speeding are part of the culture on the roads in

France but the campaign has been instrumental in reducing fatalities from 13,000 a year to the current figures. She took part in every debate about "la violence routière" (road violence) – a phrase that the charity invented, and which has become part of the French language. In 1992 she had a private meeting with President Mitterrand to instigate a points system on French driving licences. The nation's truck-drivers went on strike in protest, but a law was finally passed. The group also won a campaign to lower the allowable levels of alcohol in blood.

Nearly 20 years on, Geneviève worries about the effect of the deaths on her two living children. Looking back on Elvire's early life she believes that although she saved her sanity, it was too soon to have another child. "For months I was in another world still." It wasn't until Gauthier came along that she began to recover.

If Mathilde, the eldest, had lived she'd be 26 now. Sometimes her mother imagines what her life would have been like. She'd have met a man she loved by now,

'I have abandoned the idea that one day I will recover. This is now how I understand life'

she thinks, just as Geneviève did. Perhaps she'd be getting married. She watches her friends preparing for their daughters' weddings and wonders what it would have been like for her. "I think Elvire feels a pressure to accomplish the good things in life for three girls – herself and her two sisters. I apologise. But I this is the mother she has. She can't change it."

Gauthier started reading his mother's book but put it down after three pages. "He said it was just too sad," Elvire has read it, and set up a young person's version of Geneviève's pressure group. Is she proud? "Proud, but annoyed too," she says. "We've given enough. I would like to move on." And indeed, every time a new day dawns their lives do move on. But it's difficult. Four years ago they moved across the Seine to their apartment near the Eiffel Tower. It was a wrench. "Every tree, every corner, every person who knew me knew my children too. Now I have no reminders." Thirteen months ago Geneviève's mother died, and with her another link with the past.

She expects that in about five years' time Gauthier will leave home and then she and Laurent will be alone again. "I worry that it is then that my older children will come back into my memory," she says. "I still miss them, but I am no longer sure what I miss. It was all so long ago and they were so young."

"I feel as though someone is faintly crying inside me. In a way my life is waiting for the day when I can meet them again. When I die I can take my place beside them. "I do have a happy life, however gross it seems to say it. But if I went back to being 15 again and someone said, this is the deal: You will have two children; you will lose them; you will have a happy life afterwards – I'd have said 'No thank you. Keep it all'."

'The Disappearance' (Flamingo, £12.99). Geneviève Jurgensen will speak at the French Institute, 17 Queensberry Place, London SW7, 19 Jan at 6.30pm. Free

Is it OK for men to kiss each other?

Jon is friends with a man who has two children and who believes in hugs and kisses for both boys and girls. Jon's wife kisses everyone when they meet; Jon kisses everyone except the father, who he shakes by the hand. Is there any other gesture he could make to show closeness, without embarrassing them both?

VIRGINIA'S ADVICE

The reason that deciding how to greet people can make one cringe these days is simply because the customs are in a complete state of flux. Fifty years ago sons called their fathers "Sir" and shook their hands on meeting; no hugs between men are commonplace. If my friends are anything to go by, kisses on the cheeks, and even kisses on the lips are quite the norm, though I have to say that when it comes to lips I usually avert my mouth at the last minute, like a baby when you try to offer it a final mouthful of food. Cheeks, yes! Lips, no. (Secretly, as an uptight Englishwoman, handshakes suit me.)

Just as far as men go, probably the average state of play at the moment is that fathers and sons hug, and so do young men and close friends. Handshaking men are allowed to hug on special occasions, like at funerals or weddings. But recently, observing how men react when they meet has thrown up some weirdly different behaviour.

There's the slap on the shoulder, there's the whack on the back, or even a bit of hair-mussing. (This is a tremendously peculiar one. Imag-

ine if you were a woman, and a girlfriend came up to you, extended her painted fingernails, and proceeded to muss up your hair. You'd be livid. However, some men see it as a sign of affection.)

Then there's an extraordinary American meeting ritual, in which, one American punches the other on the chest, and the other reels back jokingly, bouncing about, making boxing movements. Utterly baffling.

Some reasons given for our formality have included the fact that we live in a cold climate, and our beastly weather doesn't encourage large, expansive gestures; or that we live on an island and are crucially aware of our limited space.

But those reasons don't wash with me. I think the great anxiety of Englishmen is that if they embrace too closely they might be thought to be gay. Continentals, who are much easier with their sexuality, or at least appear to be, have far fewer hang-ups about greeting other men. They kiss each other to bits, hug, and even long after the greeting is over, one may still have his arm around the shoulder of the other.

Funnily enough, even the most rigid of Englishmen can cope with this behaviour from a Continental.

They know exactly what it means, and never fear a surreptitious stroke on the bottom while the hug is taking place.

I have two thoughts for Jon. One is that he should simply tell himself he's a handshaker; always has been and always will be. A hug and a kiss is fairly meaningless; Jon's real love and affection for his friend will always show in other, more practical ways. Or, if he wants to become a new man, he should start slowly. At the next meeting, use two hands to shake his friend's one; at the next shake his hand but put a hand on his lower arm. Then shake his hand while putting the other hand on his shoulder and giving him a tremendous pat. At the next meeting, shake his friend's hand at the same time as drawing him a bit closer and patting him on the back.

Then it is really up to his friend to draw closer and, before he knows it, be drawn into a hug.

Of course, if they don't meet regularly it would be about 2005 before they reach this stage. But by then the customs of how to greet other will, hopefully, be thoroughly sorted out.

DILEMMAS

WITH VIRGINIA IRONSIDE



Do what feels right. As a prickly teenager I spent the summer with a close-knit Scottish family. The father drove me to catch a train for school, dropping off his sons on the way. They kissed goodbye openly, yet in my world, at that time, even mother's kisses were something to be wary about. At the station I extended my hand. He took it between his for a moment, and then enveloped me in a bear hug. I can still feel in my memory and which lightened my heart for hours.

Forty years later, a young man aged all of six told me firmly he was now too big to be kissed. Certainly, I said, we should always greet people in a way that makes them feel good. The trouble was, I felt too old not to be kissed. Next time we met, I duly shook his hand, after which he jumped up to clasp his arms round my neck like a monkey. This has been our private ritual ever since, a deadpan formal handshake followed by the joyous embrace.

ANON

Attitudes have changed. More males indulge in hugs these days, without embarrassment. This

READERS' SUGGESTIONS

need not involve a kiss, even if cheeks touch. Overcome your prejudice, and give your friend a hug! ROBIN BUTTERELL

Chester

No one will be offended. My Albanian husband was brought up to kiss his male friends and relatives on each cheek whenever they meet. When greeting my male friends or relatives, he forgets they

are not of his ethnic background and has usually kissed them before they realise what's happening.

Often I have needlessly held my breath, awaiting horrified expressions. People are either so involved in flurries of hugging and kissing that they don't realise who's doing what, or they look flattered by his affection! So go on, show some of yours! SOPHIE DHRAMI

London

NEXT WEEK'S DILEMMA

Dear Virginia, My 24-year-old son has never stuck at anything. Although he's extremely clever, he left school without taking any A-levels. He's done a variety of courses – a foundation course at art school, and a business management course which he dropped out of. He started a course of art history, which I paid for, but he left after one term. Now he just stays at home, gets up late and watches TV. I feed him but don't give him money. I suspect he gets it from a bit of

drug-dealing. His father wants to throw him out, but I feel he'll get deeper into drugs and end up in prison. What can I do? He's a lovely person in himself. Yours sincerely, Anne

Anyone who has advice quoted will be sent a bouquet from *Flamingo*. Please send letters and dilemmas to Virginia Ironside, *The Independent*, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, fax 0171-283 2182, or e-mail dilemmas@independent.co.uk – giving a postal address for sending the bouquet.

Love and human remains

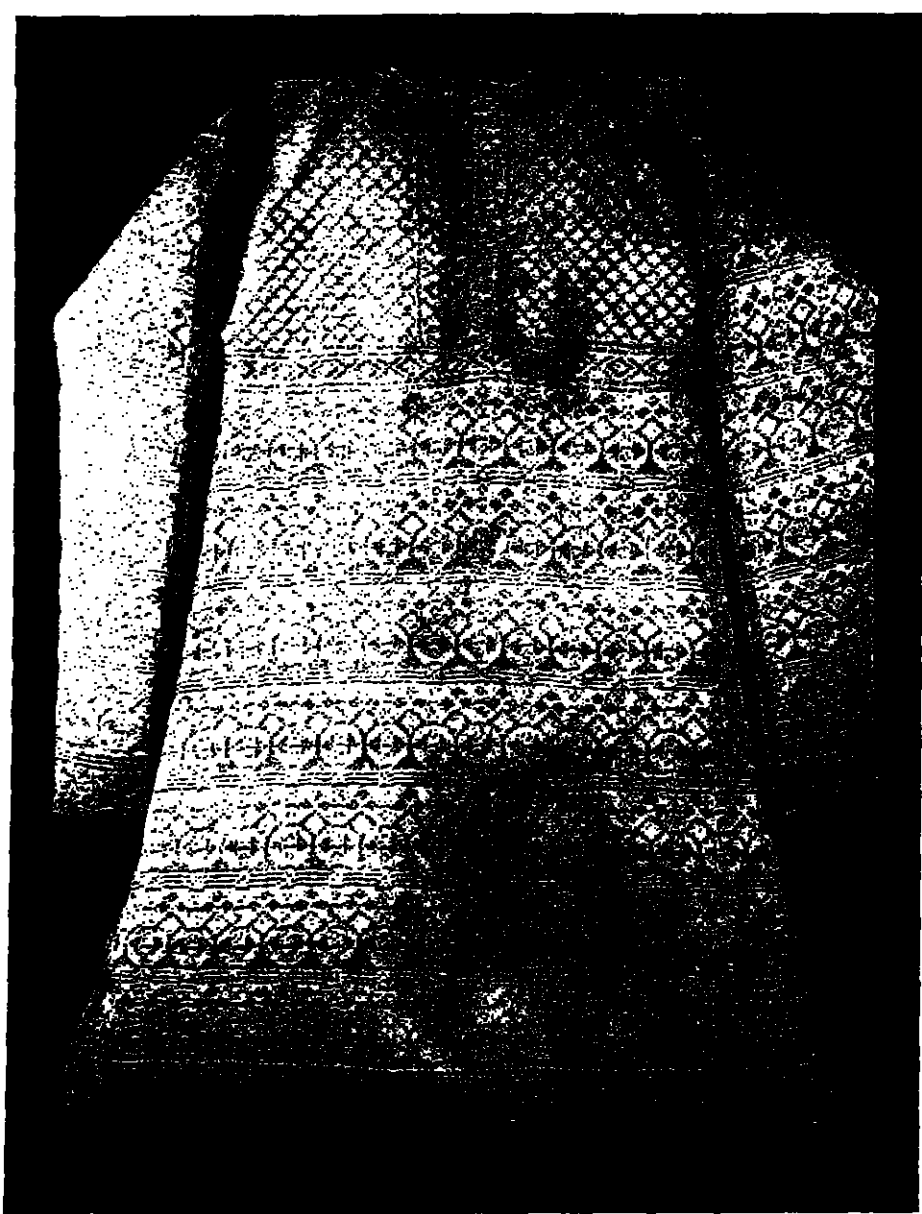
An old pair of spectacles, a stained waistcoat, a faded love letter... Why do the lifeless artefacts that make up cultural memorabilia have such a hold on the imagination? By Michael Glover

Charles I and Oliver Cromwell, rex and regicide, make for uneasy bedfellows, but that has not deterred the Museum of London from mounting an exhibition of memorabilia of the two men in commemoration of the 400th anniversary of Cromwell's birth and the 350th anniversary of Charles's execution.

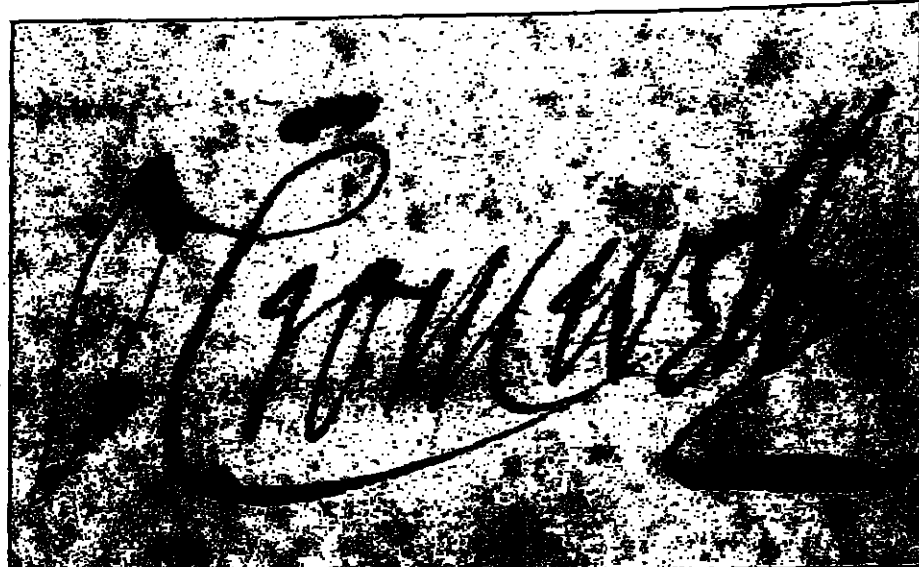
"Cromwell: Warts and All" includes the death mask, a fragment of buff jerkin, and an elaborately mounted leather button from Cromwell's doublet, accompanied by a parchment label which reads: "This is one of the buttons that was on the coat of Oliver Cromwell when he sent to judge King Charles, taken off by my grandfather, John Hardingham, who was one of Oliver's lobbyists [Redcoats] and attended him in all his wars in England and Ireland." That degree of awkward plainness has the ring of truth about it.

Other items such as the florid French portraiture and all those statuettes that were in the wake of Thomas Carlyle's famous 19th-century edition of *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* lie somewhere between hagiography and special pleading. What is undeniable is that the face of the statuettes looks little like the man whose features speak volumes from the death mask: that powerful nose, those broad cheeks, the brutality of the long mouth.

Memorabilia is always a shock, but especially those artefacts that have been worn, owned or used - such as the waistcoat displayed here that Charles is said to have worn to his execution, with its eternally intriguing pattern of ghastly stainings. "Did he kneel, lie or stoop over the 10m-high execution block?" we are invited to speculate. It is only as time passes, and the individuals are captured by later admirers for partisan reasons, that the artefacts, mere lifeless objects of commemoration now, lose their hold on our feelings. But why should this be so? What is it about the spectacles used by John Wesley that we can see in the Wesley Chapel on City Road? Or the couch on which Emily Brontë died that is still to be seen in the chilly parlour at the Haworth Parsonage? Or the various touching love tokens to Fanny Brawne at the Keats Museum in Hampstead? Or Wordsworth's ice skates, displayed in that cabinet in Dove Cottage?



Memories are made of these: Cromwell's signature; his death mask; and Charles I's waistcoat, said to have been worn on the scaffold



Museum of London

As far as writers are concerned, the problem lies with the art of replication, and what that comes to signify. A book or a poem, though usually written by one person, loses the distinctive imprimatur of its maker as soon as it is circulated. If it is successful as an act of communication, it becomes the property of its readers by virtue of its content. If it appeals widely, it is because its creator, by successfully exploring universal, interesting themes, has touched the minds and hearts of a great audience. It is now as much the reader's property as the writer's. The book is now out in the world, a universal document, and an abstraction, not bound to its particular maker as it was during those days, months or years of its painful, private gestation. It has gained a peculiar authority of its own which a mere man or woman, haranguing us from a high stool in a pub, would find it more difficult to claim. After all, mere human beings are imperfect. We can see that with our own eyes, or examine our consciences. An excellent book represents, by contrast, a kind of cold,

finished perfection, almost inhuman in its ruthlessly successful designs upon our time. What happens, then, when we come upon that lock of hair that pair of small spectacles, that strangely small and narrow ice skate? First of all, doubts assail us. What had seemed almost universal - some idea of the greatness of William Wordsworth and his poetry, for example - is, all of a sudden, particularised once again, and we experience a strangely mingled variety of feelings: were we right to

have such reckless trust in the words of this man or woman? It also reminds us that the words we had read were written in particular circumstances, amid midweek down the walls, the bravado of young children, the inquisitiveness of stray dogs. After all, in so many respects, this writer must have resembled you and me. At first, this may cause us to question the power of print. What right had it to seduce us into believing that what appeared before our eyes had any authority?

And then other, mellowed feelings supervene - the thought that we could perhaps have done the same sort of thing ourselves if we had only had the talent, the luck, the perseverance, or the rich, aristocratic friend... And also the thought that it was surely some kind of a miracle that so much came out of so little, out of a mere human life, whether - in the case of Oliver Cromwell - for good or ill.

That is a question which remains undecided to this day.

And then other, mellowed feelings

To 28 Feb. Information: 0171-600 3699

Axaxaxas Mlo and other tall stories

A FEW years ago *The Shout*, the 15-strong choir put together by the composer Orlando Gough and the composer/singer Richard Chew, would have been called a bold experiment. But Tuesday night's performance was so well organised, conceived, written and performed (and, importantly, well funded) that you couldn't possibly call it an experiment - it was a huge success.

The choir is a smaller spin-off from *The Shouting Fence*, the fantastic outdoor piece that Chew and Gough devised for the open spaces, concrete balconies and steps around the Hayward Gallery, and one of the highlights of last summer. Something like 80 energetic performers, amateur choirs, children's groups

and professional jazz and straight singers graced some of the bleakest vistas of the South Bank Centre with a vibrant piece of three-dimensional music-theatre.

Indoors requires a rather different approach, so after half an hour of Scanner's quiet ambient sounds, the choir took to the stage in a horse-shoe shape to attack Chew's complex and impressive "Tall Stories" with great energy and conviction.

After an interval, five of the singers returned for a dramatic performance of Gough's "Axaxaxas Mlo", a Borges-inspired sequence that, at times, threatened to escape into abstraction. Fortunately the sheer intensity of the piece - and its realisation - held the audience's at-

ention, as the quintet sang, chanted and made beautiful noises by candlelight, framed by a wide brick arch at the club's far side. For the final piece, Gough's "Why Do You Sing", the full 17-strong choir returned to the main stage, filling the small space with a joyful, complex noise that was still totally unamplified, with impressive solos from Mike Henry, Wayne Ellington and Angela Elliott. Occasional uncertainties and glitches may have revealed a lack of

time for rehearsal or revision, but the event was a robust, unpretentious success for all concerned. The club context worked fine - the sympathetic audience clearly relished the opportunity to listen to intelligent music with a drink to hand.

A feature of *The Shout* is the expressive use of a variety of vocal timbres - from full-blown "operatic" vowels through natural singing, to more earthy sounds. There was plenty of bravura writing - tumbling ladders of counterpoint, dissonant clusters, rhythmic riffs and chants, and special effects - yet you never heard this as an abstracted choir. Distinctive voices such as Melanie Fappenheim's, Jeremy Birchall's and Chew's, are discernible in the

acoustic mix. This is not hybrid or "fusion", but a practical and constructive coming together of styles, traditions, and musicians, that makes a lot of contemporary vocal music - and a lot of contemporary club music for that matter - sound silly, institutionalised and redundant. Ensembles such as *The Shout* and *Gogmagogs* and events such as *The Shouting Fence* are showing the way for a more meaningful form of music theatre in the future.

The event was billed as being "framed by a sampled sound mix" by Robin Rimbaud (aka Scanner), whose low-density sounds, originally sampled from *The Shout*, provided an effective contrast to the intense contemporary choral music.

Most people seemed to appreciate the *Shout*/Scanner contrast, but Rimbaud was unhappy, expecting something more in the way of collaboration (and deserving a more comfortable space to work in). Rimbaud's best work has used frequencies that work with and around spoken voices - the found conversations he scans from mobile phone networks; Harriet Walter's monologue in a radio version of Copeau's *La Voix Humaine*. The sounds he provided on this occasion were transparent enough to provide a background for conversation, yet interesting enough to reward quiet attention if you preferred solitude; genuinely ambient, in fact.

JOHN L. WALTERS

Guilt in all its subtle shades

THEATRE
THE COLOUR OF JUSTICE
TRICYCLE THEATRE
LONDON

IT IS a rare night at the theatre that begins with the director announcing that the price of the ticket includes a concessionary rate for taking a basic St John Ambulance course in first aid, or that ends with a minute's intense communal silence in remembrance of a dead youth whose murderers have, scandalously, yet to be brought to justice. Scrupulously directed by Nicolas Kent, from transcripts edited by Richard Norton-Taylor, *The Colour of Justice* is an enormously potent, staged re-enactment of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry. First aid is stressed because the police's first dereliction of duty at the scene of that crime was a failure to give his stabbed, bleeding body proper medical attention.

The piece is in the noble tradition of the Tricycle Theatre's similar staging of the "arms to Iraq" Scott inquiry and the Nuremberg trials. In the former, the cock-eyed Alice



Society confronts itself: Tricycle Theatre's staging of the Lawrence inquiry

Through the Looking Glass logic of the ministers provoked a kind of delighted intellectual outrage. But there was nothing about the snorts of sickened laughter produced here by the parade of grim-faced, edgy and occasionally furious witnesses from the police, with their refrain of "I don't remember", their seemingly institutional tendency to mislay things permanently and their apparent difficulty with

even the concept of racism. The unpatronising performances are careful not to make these figures animated "wanted" posters: the colour of culpability comes in subtly different shades. But the cross-examinations conjure up an almost farcically sordid world of corrupt collusion where, say, the key eyewitness can be put in the special "protection" of the very police officer who is professionally wooing the crim-

inal father of a key suspect. Why go to the theatre to see this? In his *Independent on Sunday* review of the "arms to Iraq" re-enactment, Irving Wardle put his finger on the value of such an exercise: "The act of framing this event on stage," he wrote, "puts it under a piercing light and renews the original sense of shock... it also reasserts the theatre's role as a supreme invention of democracy." It is, par excel-

lence, theatre as an image of society confronting itself.

It is important, though, to guard against more liberal-than-thou self-congratulation because one has participated in a collective ritual of indignation with a mixed-race audience. Indeed, the witness who moved me the most was the Irish Catholic, Conor Taffie (beautifully played by Tim Woodward). A genuine Good Samaritan, he actually went to help Stephen Lawrence as he lay bleeding at the bus stop.

It is significant that this instinctively virtuous man was also the readiest to admit in court that, because the youths were black, he initially thought it was a trick to mug him. An awareness of the reflex racism within us is the first step to overcoming it. A good man is prepared to acknowledge it. The police, still denying institutional racism, decline to do so. That's the profound lesson of this excellent evening.

PAUL TAYLOR

To 6 Feb. Booking: 0171-328 1000. A version of this review appeared in later editions of yesterday's paper

Out of space and time

DANCE

ROYAL BALLET:
ROMEO AND JULIET
ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL
LONDON

each other in the verismo of the crowd sequences. And so, during the ball, there are the vivid simultaneous pockets of drama among the guests, with Lord and Lady Capulet shuttling desperately around trying to control Juliet, to separate Tybalt and Romeo, to placate Paris. Yet how sad, this time, to watch such a stiff account of the later, pivotal fighting scene, with Jonathan Cope's Romeo standing woodenly, apparently uninterested in the fact that Mercutio is mortally wounded, and Christopher Saunders's Tybalt possibly the most stolid I have ever seen.

This was not an evening of vivid individual performances, despite the glittering core of Sylvie Guillem and Jonathan Cope. Left alone, Cope reverts to his frustrating emotional inarticulacy; but, faced with Guillem, he lets loose to become a dream Romeo handsome with his long neck

and black curls, ecstatically abandoned in his attitude towards turns, a strong and involved partner in the various pas de deux.

The technical perfection of Guillem's dancing aside, Juliet is not one of her most affecting roles. Although she is clearly sincere in Juliet's tragedy, you become aware of her physical style of acting, conscious French style of acting, among the Royal Ballet's less stylised approach. She is best at happiness, so that in the balcony scene she really makes you live the heart-leaping excitement of falling in love.

Shi-Ning Liu as Benvolio creates smooth and clear shapes, but needs to turn down the volume of his gesturing, given that less is more, except in a stadium. William Trevitt, not one of ballet's effortless or witty performers, is an impossibly handsome but unexciting Mercutio. Gary Avis causes scarcely a ripple in the admittedly boring role of Paris. Roll on some of the backstage dramas. How about a ballet version of Mary Allen's *Royal Opera House Diary*?

NADINE MEISNER

Bleak opera house

OPERA

SAMUEL BARBER:
VANESSA
LYRIC STUDIO
HAMMERSMITH

HOW IRONIC that an opera about waiting and hoping should take 40 years to arrive in the UK. Typical. Samuel Barber's *Vanessa* enjoyed a triumphant US premiere at the Metropolitan Opera, New York, in 1958. It went on to win the Pulitzer Prize for him. The libretto has its sillinesses, but the central allegory - compromise or be damned - stands firm and the score, full of aching regret and promise unfulfilled, is largely fine and occasionally special, notable above all for the frisson of Barber's wonderfully ambiguous harmonies and heady orchestrations.

At Hammersmith, times are hard. The Other Theatre Company (under severe financial constraints) can manage only a piano. Which begs the question: can one really bill this as the UK premiere? One can applaud the enterprise, for sure. Companies like this can perform a valuable service in refreshing parts of the repertoire that more prosperous organisations can't or won't reach. The piano (bravely played by Anthony Kraus) is fine if you know, and can hear, the orchestrations in your subconscious. For those who don't, and can't, the complexion of the piece is altered. For better or worse, it becomes a bleaker and more consumptive essay. The director Loveday Ingram has effectively capitalised on that. The Lyric Studio, swathed in black, is made to feel suitably claustrophobic, windows and mirrors of the mind covered. Gaunt double doors convey the scale of Vanessa's estate. A scattering of snow suggests the long winters of discontent, inside as well as out. It's a house of sorrow and hopelessness. The exquisite prelude to the final scene sounds like subversive Chopin.

Subversive Barber, though, I had not bargained for. Anyone who has heard the famous Leontyne Price recording of Vanessa's Act 1 aria might well have been wondering if Meryl Richardson was singing the same music. She looked strikingly svelte and neurotic, and behaved accordingly, but this shallow, glassy, asstringent voice was distressingly at odds with Barber's effluent lyricism, curdling even the glorious quinter in the last scene. Louis Mott's "Erika", warmly, compassionately sung, provided some compensation, and Evan Bowers, as Anatol, was a tenor of some substance. So a taster, no more, of Barber's *Vanessa*. Ignore the programme synopsis which, despite correction, still gets the relationship between the characters wrong. That's not shoe-string, that's shoddy.

EDWARD SECKERSON

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THE BIG PICTURE



ANTHONY QUINN

THE OPPOSITE OF SEX (18)
DIRECTOR: DON ROOS
STARRING: CHRISTINA RICCI,
MARTIN DONOVAN,
LISA KUDROW
100 MINS

Take Alicia Silverstone from *Clueless*, transplant her to white-trash Louisiana, add some puppy fat, stir in a bitter dose of cynicism, and you have something like 16-year-old Dedee Truitt (Christina Ricci), anti-heroine of Don Roos's bracingly upfront comedy *The Opposite of Sex*.

Destined to become one of the great movie minxes, Dedee gets the picture off to a breezy start at her stepfather's funeral, flicking a cigarette butt into his newly dug grave, wrestling her mom to the ground, then packing up and hitting the road, handgun in tow. "If you think I'm like, plucky and scrappy, and all I need is love, you're in over your head," she says, coolly addressing the audience. "I don't have a heart of gold, and I don't grow one later. OK?" You'd better believe it.

Dedee's insolent asides make us her confidants as she turns up on the doorstep of her gay half-brother, Bill (Martin Donovan), who's "like, the definition of a softie." You fear for him. Having installed herself chez Bill, who's too nice to make a fuss, Dedee sets to work on seducing his hunky but not-too-bright boyfriend, Matt (Ivan Sergei). Her question to him: how does he know he's not into sex with women if he's never tried it? His reply: "I've never tried communism either. Or grits."

But you can't underestimate Dedee's wiles. Once she gets pregnant, things start to get very complicated indeed. Matt and Dedee make off with Bill's money and the ashes of his late lover - as ransom, you understand - at which point Matt's ex-lover, Jason (Johnny Galecki), shows up, threatening to frame Bill for sexual harassment at school. So Bill and his schoolteacher friend, Lucia, hotfoot it to Los Angeles, where the fugitive pair have gone to ground.



Woman beware woman: Lisa Kudrow and Christina Ricci as the poles-apart Lucia and Dedee

If that plot sounds a little crowded, don't be alarmed. Roos is more concerned with exploring character than the mechanics of farce, and he's written a terrifically spiky script to back up his conception. With Dedee's voice at the controls, he ensures that sentimentality won't blunt the film's razor tooth, and he keeps the audience slightly off-balance throughout. Dedee booby-traps her narration with teasing bluffs, candid operus and a sardonic contempt for film tradition: *The Opposite of Sex* could be seen as a coming-of-age movie, save for the fact that that Dedee hates coming-of-age movies, particularly the line: "I never was the same again after that summer." Can you blame her? Besides, one look at her sullen baby-doll features tells you she probably came of age around the time she stopped breast-feeding. The elfin Ricci does amazing work

here: female roles with this much sass and swagger don't come along very often, and she takes it to with a heartless gusto. What's more remarkable is that the film actually has two great comic performances. Dedee, having left Bill to pick up the tab for all the hell-raising she's done, isn't quite so prominent in the film's second half; instead, centre-stage is commandeered by Lucia, virtuous and responsible like Bill, and miserable with repression. As played by Lisa Kudrow, she's a bit of a scold, and knows it - we get a sense of real loneliness from her, too; perhaps all those high-minded principles have scared men off. "How does a woman get so bitter?" "Observation," she rejoins.

Continually horrified by other people's misbehaviour (of Dedee: "My God, she's the human tabloid!"), Lucia is too uptight and

schoolmarmish to notice that the local sheriff (Lyle Lovett) has become sweet on her. In her role as Phoebe, the flaky folkie in *Friends*, Kudrow's adorable dippiness has always got on my nerves, yet she's a revelation here.

Without its ever seeming schematic, Lucia and Dedee represent the film's contrary poles: as the latter sees it, sex ends in babies and relationships, whereas she just wants the opposite of that - namely untrammelled, promiscuous fun. Lucia, on the other hand, regards love and companionship and fulfilment as the highest goals, and scorns those who selfishly pursue their own ends. As she tells one such offender: "This is how we do things on the planet Maturia. We have much to teach you." In the end, of course, the definitions blur as both women find that they can get themselves snagged somewhere in be-

tween love and sex, between pleasing yourself and doing unto others. It's, like, life.

Driven along by a jaunty jazz score, Roos's film says a little in its final third as lessons are, however so ironically, handed around. But you wouldn't begrudge the feel-good ending. Roos has managed something quite unusual in this film (his debut, incidentally). While he evidently likes his characters, he doesn't bust a gut trying to make us like them. They all, to one degree or another, exasperate, and offend, and occasionally appeal - even saintly Bill and his forbearance had me grinding my teeth - yet we don't mind extending them our sympathy, precisely because none of them ever asks for it.

In the end, it feels like an optimistic movie. Who'd have guessed from the title that the opposite of sex was actually something good?

ALSO SHOWING

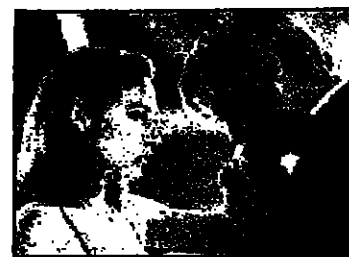
MEET JOE BLACK MARTIN BREST (12)
■ SOUR GRAPES LARRY DAVID (15) ■ DOBERMANN
JAN KOUNEN (18) ■ BUTTONEERS PETR ZELENA (NC)

IN MEET Joe Black: a sixtiesomething widower, Bill Parrish (Anthony Hopkins), has been getting intimations - doomy voices, ticker trouble - that all point the same way: his number's up. Sure enough, death pays him a house call, only he's not your usual Grim Reaper in cadaverous make-up and a tatty cowl. No: in Martin Brest's portentous romantic drama, death is played by Brad Pitt with blond highlights, a \$3,000 suit and a vaguely beatific air. Death wants some vacation time on Earth before whisking Parrish away (the source is the 1934 film *Death Takes a Holiday*), and it seems he's no fool: he chooses to stay with Parrish, a media tycoon afloat in baronial splendour in Manhattan, rather than with, say, a rent collector in New Jersey.

The old man then finds death - renamed Joe Black - making the moves on his favourite daughter Susan (Claire Forlan), who seems very taken with her father's mysterious new guest. So the question is posed: is love stronger than death? Hollywood is somewhat preoccupied with this subject. Last year's *City of Angels* and the unspeakable *What Dreams May Come* dabbled with romance beyond the grave, though whether this indicates a new-found spirituality or simply the age-old *timor mortis* is unclear. Either way, it seems to encourage an astonishing windiness in film-makers, and lamentable posturing in actors. Brad Pitt complained in an interview that his role defied research, but his impersonation of death as a stiff-necked, strangle-voiced hick who likes peanut butter is not the stuff to provoke anyone to fear and trembling.

The subplot concerns a dastardly takeover bid that will break Parrish's empire asunder, and at least it is a kind of plot; the rest of the movie snails towards the three-hour mark beneath the weight of a thousand Souful Glances, Profound Silences and Ridiculous Speeches. (Pitt talking patois to a dying Jamaican grandmother qualifies as a low point.) That Brest has no sense of pacing is palpable, but a sense of mercy would have been nice. All that keeps boredom at bay is Forlan's almond eyes, Hopkins's tender gravitas and the sadly infrequent presence of Jeffrey Tambor as the tycoon's son-in-law, proving that his Hank from *The Larry Sanders Show* is no fluke: he has an actor's timing as well as a comedian's. Maybe they should have let him play Death instead.

Anyone who has ever stayed up to watch *Seinfeld* will discern the stamp of its co-creator Larry David in *Sour Grapes*, a feature debut that thrives on the same meticulous comedy of triviality. It's a tale of two



cousins who fall out over a windfall. Brain surgeon Evan (Steven Weber) and sports-shoe designer Richie (Craig Bierko) take their girlfriends for a weekend in Atlantic City. Richie borrows two quarters from Evan for a last go on the slot machine - and hits the jackpot, to the tune of \$436,000. Trouble begins when Evan asks for half of the loot. Richie, of course, won't give him a red cent.

What follows is a complicated yet neatly worked farce straight from the *Seinfeld* textbook, whereby an anecdote is steam-rolled flat beneath a ton of misunderstandings, running gags and cute observations. There are some good one-liners, and a tart mini-parody of *Friends* that's just about the funniest thing in the movie. Yet *Sour Grapes* hasn't really enough juice to get it home, and it also reminded me why I don't care for *Seinfeld* any more. It's not the relentless small-mindedness so much as the self-satisfied way the comedy is played out; it's like the bloke in the pub who gets laughs for his first few jokes but doesn't know when to stop.

Doberman is, in at least two senses, a dog. Jan Kounen's cops and robbers movie trades in a hip, cartoonish ultraviolence that would make us go ooh! if it hadn't been done to death already. Vincent Cassel plays the leather-clad outlaw Yann, aka The Doberman, who with his deaf moll (Monica Bellucci) and a ragtag gang of psychopaths raids a Paris bank and leaves a trail of bodies. Out to nail him is a cop of such staggering moral turpitude (Tcheky Karyo) that you are immediately inclined to side with the criminal. Kounen directs in the frenzied, kinetic style of an MTV video, though he nods to other influences via a prominent display of two movie posters, *Transcending* and *The Usual Suspects*. Well, he can dream.

The six interrelated stories making up the Czech indie *Buttioneers* are united by a curiosity with fate, coincidence and the atom bomb. The writer-director Petr Zelenka has a quirky affection for the way things link up and comment on one other, sparking magical connections. It gets by on a ramshackle combination of eccentricity and rude charm.

ALL films on release from 15 Jan

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Robert Carlyle vs. Pierce Brosnan

THE CAST for *The World Is Not Enough*, James Bond's next outing, is beginning to shape up. The ex-breakfast-time siren Denise Van Outen has landed herself a part in the franchise's traditionally spectacular opening sequence, according to *The Mirror*. Van Outen's casting follows the production company's announcement that Pierce Brosnan will be up against none other than Robert Carlyle. He'll play the arch-villain Renard who, thanks to a bullet lodged in his brain, is immune to pain. Fine, but surely the producers have missed a chance to resurrect Carlyle's psychotic turn in *Trainspotting*: Begbie vs Bond - "Come ahead, 007, ye radge wee shite!"

1998 WAS the year that the ship came in for 20th Century Fox and Paramount. According



to *Variety*, *Titanic* earned the studios \$3.2bn in theatrical, video and record releases and broadcast-rights sales last year. The video of James Cameron's epic alone has brought in revenue worth \$1bn, the result of worldwide sales of more than 57 million units.

WITH LESS than a year to go before the start of the new millennium, there are certain things to which humanity will cling as earthquakes rend the earth, the sky falls on our heads and the clock on the video packs up - the eternal truth of Woody Allen's ongoing visits to his analyst being just one. Well, no more. According to a BBC interview to be broadcast this year, Mr Neurotic is so happy with his wife, Soon-Yi, that he's stopped seeing his shrink. Verily, the apocalypse is nigh.

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NOW SHOWING AT CINEMAS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Cinema to dishonour France

Serious cinema, or canny commercialism? Liese Spencer examines the current French vogue for in-your-face film violence

When, in 1995, Mathieu Kassovitz's incendiary debut *La Haine* opened in France, its hard-hitting tale of poverty, racism and police brutality sparked rioting in the *banlieue* among viewers who identified all too closely with the film's multiracial, disenfranchised anti-heroes. Now Gaspar Noé and Jan Kounen seek to provoke the same powerful reactions with their uncompromising first features *Seul Contre Tous* (I Stand Alone) and *Dobermann*.

But are these violent movies part of a wider attempt to reinstate social criticism into French cinema, or merely Gallie exploitation flicks, smash-and-grab calling-cards from film-makers with an eye on the international market?

Both films, though very different in style, come under the broad umbrella of *Jeune Cinéma Français*, a movement that Ginette Vincendeau, a lecturer in French cinema at Warwick University, describes as "an amalgam of artistic vision and issues which are about more than middle-class people having affairs in beautiful apartments".

Along with other recent releases such as *Clubbed to Death*, *The Dream Life of Angels* and *La Vie de Jésus*, these post-*La Haine* products eschew the empty cool of stylists such as Luc Besson (*Nikita*), Jean-Jacques Beineix (*Betty Blue*) and Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Marc Caro (*Delicatessen*), offering instead snapshots from a France riddled with unemployment and racism.

Still, while this new breed of French film broadens the country's celluloid exports beyond the traditional heritage swashbucklers and exquisite psychodramas, Vincendeau cautions against making any explicitly political claims for such movies. Indeed, the last thing these young film-makers wants is to be described as polemical.

"In France, critics use 'sociological' to describe TV movies, so anyone with artistic ambitions is careful to avoid the label," says Vincendeau.

It's an argument supported by Noé's press statement for *Seul Contre Tous*, in which one of the reasons he cites for making the film is "to depict the France I see every day, a France that looks more like the country described in Hugo, Zola, Henri Charrière or in any other documentary about Vichy, than the vision of France depicted in the films that invade my TV screen, made by more civilised film-makers".

Edited to the sound of off-screen gunshots, interspersed with inter-titles and even featuring a sensational 30-second countdown (in which viewers are given a chance to leave



Not pleased to see you: top, 'Dobermann'; bottom left, 'La Haine'; bottom right, 'Seul Contre Tous'

the cinema before its climax), *Seul Contre Tous* works hard to manipulate a reaction.

"One critic said that just hearing the music made him want to call Amnesty International," recalls Noé with satisfaction, adding that he made the film to "dishonour France" and would have liked to have had it banned, since it would have shown that he "had made something shocking".

The liberal agenda behind Noé's deadpan

irony is betrayed, however, by the skill with which he turns his monstrous aggressor into a pathetic victim at the film's finish. Stripping away all the physical and emotional comfort of what he calls "soft bourgeois French cinema" Noé reduces humanity to sex, shelter and animal survival, then shows how - in such conditions - tolerance and morality can be regarded as life's little luxuries.

If *Seul Contre Tous* is not overtly politi-

cal, its in-your-face aesthetic certainly bangs home a distinctly moral message. Not so *Dobermann*. "Your first film shows the juvenile side of you: you just want to shake everyone up," says Jan Kounen of his debut feature. *Dobermann* is an ultra-violent, ultra-stylised action movie full of cartoon sex and sadism, which pits Vincent Cassel's eponymous outlaw and his feral gang against Teheky Karyo's flamboyantly corrupt cop.

Like Noé, Kounen uses guerrilla tactics to aggressively nail the attention of his audience. And, like Noé, Kounen denies any sociological or satirical intent - the difference being that, after watching *Dobermann*, you believe him. Kounen's defiantly shallow romp revels in its own lack of substance, seemingly content to pastiche the action genre in a series of endless explosions and politically incorrect exchanges between two-dimensional stereotypes.

Even its star, Vincent Cassel, will admit this: "There was not much dialogue. It was like playing Batman. Playing Vinz in *La Haine* was different; he was a real anti-hero. I think *Dobermann* is a fantasy Vinz might have had of himself, someone Vinz would have loved to be."

Interestingly, while *Seul Contre Tous* won only praise from both left- and right-wing commentators in France, *Dobermann*'s provocations unleashed a torrent of critical venom.

"The press were saying that it was a Nazi movie," remembers Noé. "I think what really offended them was that although the film was made in France, it looks like a Japanese Manga movie. Critics saw that as some kind of cultural betrayal."

Pushed to a comic extreme, *Dobermann*'s crass genericism marks it out from the auteur tendencies of much *Jeune Cinéma Français*. But traces of its magpie commercialism are in many of the films - not least in *La Haine*'s homage to *Taxi Driver*.

"The reason *La Haine* was such a success was that it managed to channel French social issues into the format of an international crime thriller," says Vincendeau. "Kassovitz borrowed from John Woo, Scorsese and Spike Lee to produce a hybrid of the political movie and the more fashionable crime noir."

Cassel is confident that such a trick can be repeated. "There is this thing going on in Paris, a lot of young actors and young film-makers who are making friends with each other - Cassel's directorial debut, *Crime Boulevard*, is produced by the guy who produced *La Haine* - and feeling very confident. Gaspar Noé, Jan Kounen, Mathieu Kassovitz - suddenly, we're here, and they [the French film industry] cannot do without us. But the war is not over yet; there's a lot to do. Probably the war is to have a movie released around the world, not to be completely crushed by the US movie industry."

Indeed, whether these young guns win or lose the war, whether they're exploiting or exposing, one thing's for sure: violence always sells.

Anthony Quinn reviews 'Dobermann' on page 11

A SHORT HISTORY OF ULTRA VIOLENCE

1990s: Bertrand Tavernier's *L.627* is a lone slice of *vérité* in an ocean of designer style. It investigates issues of racism in the police force and society in general.

1991: Gaspar Noé releases his short *Corne*, in which a butcher, mistakenly believing his daughter has been raped, exacts a terrible revenge. He drafts a screenplay for *Seul Contre Tous* and shows it to potential backers, who tell him to "go away and come back with a normal movie starring normal actors".

1993: Jan Kounen releases his short *Vibroboy*, a comedy displaying the one-time cartoonist's obsession with sex and violence - a psychopath runs amok with a phallic fertility symbol strapped to a chainsaw.

April 1995: After Kassovitz's comments that "La Haine is an anti-police film", security police turn their backs on the film's cast and crew at a Cannes preview screening.

June 1995: Following huge success, 260 copies of *La Haine* are made instead of the usual 50, but after riots in the suburbs the film is accused of inciting violence.

Edinburgh Festival 1998: Gaspar Noé speaking about *Seul Contre Tous*: "A lot of people ask me if this is a racist movie, and I say, yes, it's an anti-French movie."

Strong, conniving women: the final frontier

Director Don Roos scripted *Hart to Hart* and *Dynasty 2*. No surprise then that *The Opposite of Sex* is about a bitch from hell. By Geoffrey Macnab

DON ROOS began his career in Hollywood writing glossy, prime-time soap operas. He ticks off the credits. First was *Hart to Hart*. Then followed *Paper Dolls* (trials and travails of teenage fashion models), *Dynasty 2* (trials and travails of the Colby family) and *Nightingales* (trials and travails of student nurses). This last effort, he says proudly, was voted worst television show of the Eighties. "We were hounded off the air by the Nurses' Association of America. They really objected to our depiction of student nurses as ready and willing to jump into the sack with any young doctor who came by."

Watching *The Opposite of Sex*, Roos's directorial debut, it isn't hard

to spot the soap opera influence. With her red lipstick and white bikini, the film's teenage narrator Dedee Truitt (beautifully played by Christina Ricci) looks like a Long Island Lolita. She also behaves every bit as monstrously as Joan Collins's Alexis. She lies, steals and sleeps around, gleefully spreading malicious rumours wherever she goes. "I like strong, conniving women with wicked tongues," Roos explains when asked about the origins of the character. "They're a staple of soap opera. There's a gossipy feel to this movie - it's not a film about ideas. What interests me is two people in a room having a fight."

Dedee fuels *The Opposite of Sex*

with "a sense of energy, drive and sexual recklessness", but she's not the first "bad girl". Roos has created. Back in 1992, he scripted *Single White Female*, which famously featured the flatmate-from-hell Jennifer Jason Leigh tossing a Labrador puppy out of a skyscraper window. "They're both violent, dark characters," he acknowledges, "but Leigh is full of self-pity. The big difference here is that Dedee never whines or tries to make us like her." In other words, we root for her, whatever she does. To show her in an even more gaudy light, Roos cast Lyle Lovett as the small-town sheriff bumbling along in her wake. "He always reminded me of a face on Mount



Don Roos Andrew Buurman

Rushmore," he says of the lugubrious country singer turned actor. "He has a chiselled, granite quality - he looks really American and solid."

Roos, now 43, grew up in the late

Fifties in what he refers to as "a very suburban, middle-class, rigid society." He was eight years old when Kennedy was assassinated, an event that shook his family to the core. "Kennedy was a huge, important, mythic figure for us," he remembers. "His death was the first time I had seen adults shaken and crying."

Roos's first screenplay, *Love Field*, focuses on the events surrounding the killing. In the film, Michelle Pfeiffer plays Lurene, a Dallas housewife who embarks on an epic trek across country to Kennedy's funeral in Washington. A naive, idealistic busybody with complete faith in the myth of JFK's Camelot, Lurene is the polar opposite of Dedee. Neverthe-

less, he treats her with sympathy. His own mother was equally obsessed with Kennedy. As you'd expect from the future soap opera writer, he, too, bought into the glamour, show business and gossip surrounding JFK and Jackie. "We didn't go to the funeral but we sure as hell went to see the grave more than once."

There are some unlikely parallels between *Love Field* and *The Opposite of Sex*. Both feature strong female characters. Both are road movies, as indeed are *Boys on the Side*, the film about three women on their way across America which Roos wrote in 1995, and *Diabolique*, the (very soapy, OTT) remake of the George Clouzot classic which he

scripted in 1996. "That is something peculiarly American," he says. "If you have problems in a certain setting, you just get in a car and see what happens."

Even now, Roos admits to a certain embarrassment about *The Opposite of Sex*. It is far franker than anything he has written before, he half-wishes he hadn't made the film, and he is still worried that his mother didn't like it. "She called me up and said, 'Don, I saw your movie and you're a genius. The scenery was beautiful.' But there isn't any scenery in the movie... three trees at most!"

See reviews, page 11

the class trip

a film by claude miller

"A film that stamps all over Hollywood portrayals of childhood innocence. Very dark, very good" *ESQUIRE*

"Miller walks a knife edge of dreadful uncertainty with absolute assurance" *EVENING STANDARD*

"tightly crafted psychological thriller" *THE GUARDIAN*



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PETR ZELENA, DIRECTOR OF 'BUTTONERS', ON HIS IDEAL CINEMATIC PAIRING



GUMMO DIR. HARMONY KORINE (1997)

BUFFALO 66 VINCENT GALLO (1997)

THESE FILMS represent the very healthy stream of author/director movies. Both directors also appear in the films. They are very experimental, yet not so way-out that they are unwatchable. When directors have been writers or actors, it seems to me that they are experienced enough to tell what is important and what is not. Which is a vital quality when you want to make good films on a small budget.

Gummo was a real revelation. It's so authentic - you can't mistake this film for any

other. For instance, the music is very specific, thrash-metal. The acting is also superb. There's a combination of actors and non-actors and you are unable to tell the difference. You can usually use amateurs for a small part, although in *Gummo* the main character was played - brilliantly - by a non-actor. *Gummo* is a different take on a familiar genre. It is about a very depressive neighbourhood, where young boys are coming of age. The boys kill alley-cats for money, which is rather like having a job somewhere between killing people and an ordinary occupation. Like *Buffalo 66* it's a grey area between a gangster film

and a film about a typical middle-class life. *Buffalo 66* could be a violent jail-house film, except that the guy who gets out of jail is gentle. He is too shy to kiss the girl.

Both these films are very funny. Humour is very important to me, otherwise it's like a Bergman film and can risk being a bit pretentious. A lot of the humour comes from Gallo and Korine because they don't take themselves too seriously. You can tell a lot about the director from the script - much more than from directing techniques. And, because of this, writers are more interesting to me.

INTERVIEW BY JENNIFER RODGER

ROBERT HANKS

The most striking thing about 'Mersey Blues' was the money involved



PAGE 18

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"Truly astonishing... truly unique."

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Courts should recognise that rape victims are not there to be tried. By Grania Langdon-Down

Asking for fairness

I expected the prosecutor to be on my side, but he didn't even introduce himself to me before the case," recalls Jessica, bitterly disillusioned by the criminal justice system. After she was raped by her ex-husband, her fear that he might assault her again gave her the courage to see her complaint through to trial - only then to see him acquitted.

Jessica, 36, who has two small children, has nothing but praise for the way the police dealt with the investigation and the help offered by her local rape crisis centre - all of which made the court process even more of a let-down.

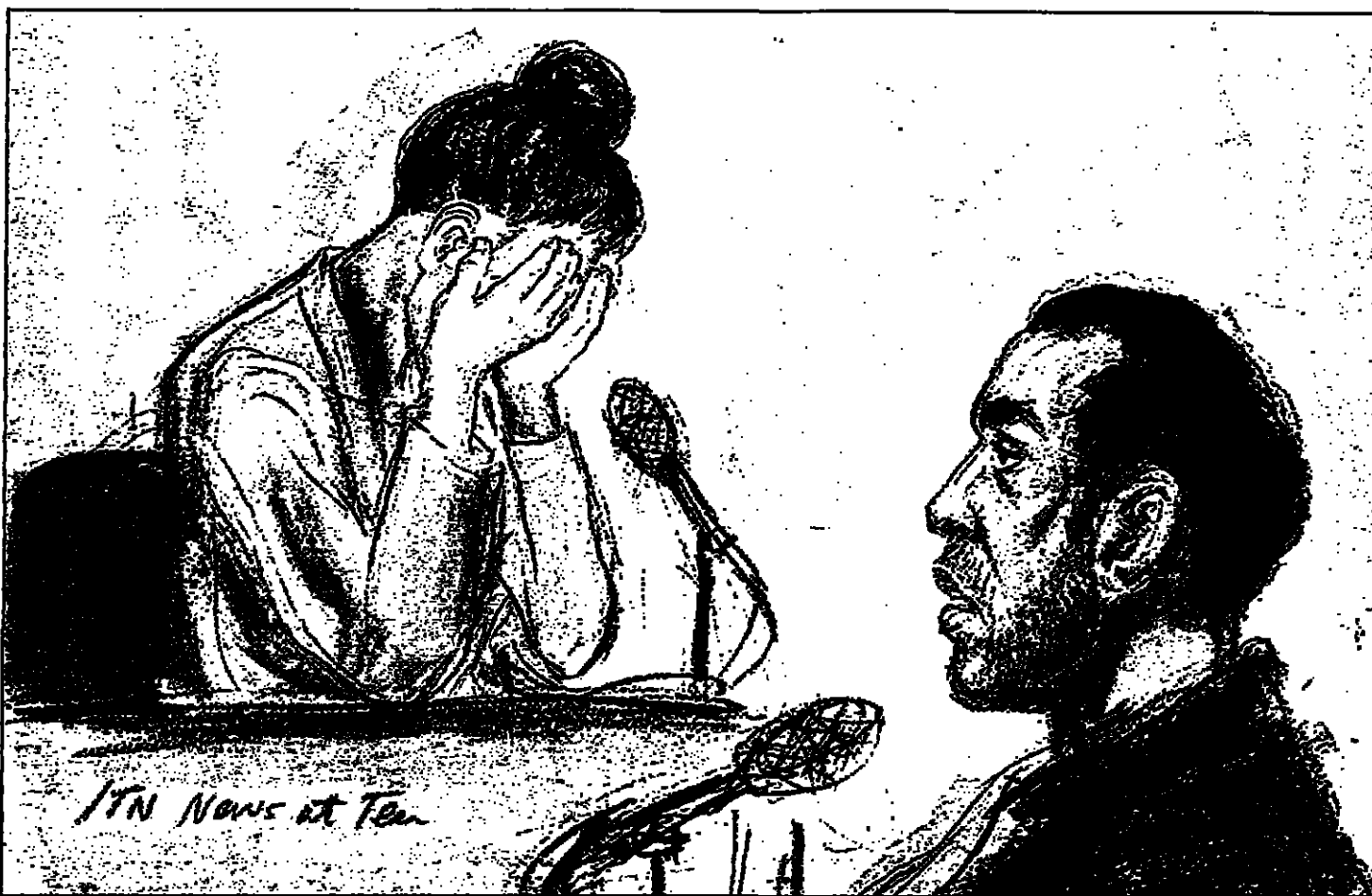
"I was shocked and dismayed that when the defence started telling lies about me, and his friends were called to give character evidence for him and against me, suggesting that I was a slag, the prosecutor didn't leap to his feet and challenge what was being said. It went on in this vein right up to the closing speeches. The defence lawyer, who was very clever, suggested that I had asked for it, suggested that I liked a bit of rough. The prosecutor didn't disabuse the jury of this even during his closing speech.

"What was really surprising was that though he was on trial, I was the one who was being condemned. I asked myself after the acquittal whether, if I had had someone who knew the story, who had talked it through with me beforehand and who knew what the defence barrister's tactics were likely to be, there would have been a verdict of guilty."

The role of the prosecution is one of the factors being considered in a Home Office study into why the conviction rate for rape has dropped dramatically - from 24 per cent in 1985 to 10 per cent in 1996 - despite a threefold increase in the number of rapes recorded by the police over the same period.

David Magson, assistant chief crown prosecutor for the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) in Yorkshire, has been liaising with the Research Centre on Violence, Abuse and Gender Relations at Leeds Metropolitan University to set up a pilot course to train prosecutors in such cases. He says that the drop in the conviction rate has to be seen in the context of the number of cases now coming to trial which would not even have been investigated 20 years ago.

"You cannot necessarily take the fact that there are now more ac-



The rape victim in the trial of Ralston Edwards broke down as he cross-examined her in court

quittals as being a failure of the whole system. But I think you can say that there is a greater number of acquittals in rape cases than in other sorts of cases and, yes, we need to look at that," he concedes.

He adds that rape and sexual assault cases are supervised by CPS lawyers with at least 10 years' experience, and cases are presented in court by independent counsel.

"Part of the course will be aimed at increasing awareness of the mainly male counsel so that they do not make the same assumptions that you sometimes hear judges making," explains Magson.

Another aim of the course is to ensure that prosecutors robustly challenge attempts by the defence to cross-examine complainants on their past sexual history. Magson says: "That is quite clearly a duty of the prosecuting counsel. One of the purposes of this exercise is to educate prosecutors so that they are fully aware of all the relevant legislation and decided case law that

go towards protecting the victim." That will include proposals under the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Bill that evidence of or questioning about a complainant's sexual behaviour will not be admissible as evidence of whether he or she consented to the offence, unless a judge decides that it relates to a specific instance of fact within 24 hours of the alleged assault, and that its main purpose is not to impugn the witness's character.

The court process has been made even more harrowing for some rape victims who have had to face being cross-examined in court by their alleged attacker. Ralston Edwards was jailed for life after he cross-examined his victim for six days, a case which has led to a change in the law to prevent alleged rapists questioning victims.

Concern over the effectiveness of some rape prosecutions prompted the research centre to set up its pilot course offering prosecutors expert training in dealing with the special

circumstances that surround rape and sexual assault cases.

The course, which is due to start this spring in Leeds, involves three two-hour seminars covering latest research, changes in legislation, trial preparation, dealing with witnesses, cross-examination techniques and the Appeal Court process. Julie Bindel, assistant director of the research centre, says that the course, which is being designed with the close co-operation of the CPS in Yorkshire, will be evaluated to show whether it results in more convictions. Depending on the results, there are hopes that it may eventually be funded nationally by the Home Office.

"We are not suggesting that prosecutors do not know how to do their job. What we want to do is give them the latest thinking on forensic evidence, courtroom techniques and current research so that they can prosecute these cases more effectively."

"Prosecutors are the people who

have to educate juries about rape myths - that there are somehow 'deserving' and 'undeserving' victims, that marital or acquaintance rape is not as damaging as rape by a stranger - and that means being alive to the influence of their own prejudices," says Bindel.

Speakers on the course include Fiona Mason, forensic psychiatrist at Broadmoor, Jennifer Temkin, professor of law at Sussex University, Helen Grindrod QC, an experienced prosecutor, and barrister Vera Baird, author of *Rape in Court*, a critique of rape trials, published last year.

Vera Baird says that the Bill will also allow evidence regarding sexual behaviour to be admitted to rebut evidence called by the prosecution about the complainant, so it is essential that prosecutors are trained to avoid that happening. She says: "It is no more to the Crown's advantage to show that the witness is a model of virtue than it is to the defence to show that she is a tart. They are two sides of the same error."

Human rights in the balance

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KEIR STARMER

HUMAN RIGHTS come in many shapes and sizes. Resolving the apparent conflict between General Pinochet's claim to sovereign immunity and the rights of his alleged victims to justice is not difficult from a human rights perspective. The case against Pinochet, as set out in the Spanish request for his extradition, is that after the military coup in 1973 the Dina or secret police, who were answerable to Pinochet, engaged in torture and hostage-taking.

Confronted with allegations of such inhumanity, few would dissent from the ill-fated House of Lords decision that such acts cannot be regarded as a function of a head of state such as to attract immunity from criminal proceedings.

But finding the right balance between human rights and democracy is more difficult.

As the House of Lords was hearing the Pinochet case, the Human Rights Act 1998 slipped on to the statute book. It gives effect in our law to the rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights.

Under the Act, it will be unlawful for any public authorities - including central and local government, the police and even courts - to violate convention rights. The issue of human rights will affect all contact between the individual and the state.

The ingenious feature of the Act is the way it attempts to balance the democratic right of the majority to exercise political power with the democratic need of individuals and minorities to have their human rights secured.

The Act aims to give the courts as much leeway as possible to protect rights, short of power to ignore Acts of Parliament. All legislation is to be interpreted as far as possible in a way that is compatible with convention rights. If that is not possible, the higher courts will adjudicate; then it will be for Parliament to decide whether there should be legislation.

The declaration of incompatibility is therefore a crafty device intended to sidestep the controversial issue of parliamentary sovereignty. Whether it succeeds will

depend mostly on the attitude of the judges to their new role.

The Government hopes that the effect of the new Act will be to create a human rights culture in the UK. To achieve this, the start date for the Act has been delayed until 2000 so that the Judicial Studies Board can finish training judges, magistrates and tribunal members in human rights law. A close scrutiny of some of the decisions in our courts over the past 25 years suggests that the £6m cost will be well worth it.

But a human rights culture cannot be imposed from the top. The Act is unlikely to succeed without a public awareness campaign. The Pinochet case and those following - including the rehearing later this month - will keep the issue of human rights in the public eye for only a limited period.

A good example of an effective awareness campaign comes from South Africa, where the human rights provisions of the new constitution were drafted only after full consultation with the public. When it became law millions of copies were printed (many in cartoon form, for those with reading difficulties). No such promotion is envisaged for the UK's Human Rights Act.

The claim by the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, that the Act will create a "new and better relationship between the Government and the people" is unlikely to be realised if implementation is left to the judges and lawyers.

Keir Starmer is a barrister at Doughty Street Chambers specialising in human rights

A-Z OF EMPLOYERS

MARKS & SPENCER

Age: 114.

History: Russian refugee Michael Marks founded the company in 1884, in Kirkgate, a Leeds street market. Ten years later, he teamed up with Tom Spencer, a cashier from a wholesale company, and established the Marks and Spencer Penny Bazaar. In the 1920s, the growing business adopted a then-revolutionary policy of buying direct from manufacturers, and in 1926 Marks and Spencer became a public company, registering the trademark "St Michael". Two years later, in 1930, it opened its flagship store at Marble Arch, and during that decade began to sell food and set up a staff welfare department. When the war came, M&S was involved in running the clothing Utility Scheme. In the mid-1970s, it opened its first continental stores, and in 1988, it bought the American clothing company Brooks Brothers and Kings Super Markets, a US food chain. Mid-1990s, it launched its financial services.

Address: Headquarters are at Michael House, Baker Street, London W1.

Ambience: Renowned as a friendly environment with a high emphasis on team-work.

Vital statistics: There are now 470 stores employing 71,300 people, with a turnover of around £2bn per annum. Around a quarter of the UK adult population visits the stores each week. The company has quite an investment programme, too: £10m this year on community-related projects, plus a three-year £2.2bn scheme. There are more than 3,000 food lines on display, and company's Classics brand is the UK's fourth largest in cosmetics; it also has 33 per cent of the UK's sandwich market.

Lifestyle: Those working in stores will be expected to work weekends and late nights. Trainees have to be "flexible".

Easy to get into? Leadership, adaptability, personal flair and individuality are essential qualities, says a spokesperson. "We're not looking for clones," she explains. "By taking on new people, we keep bringing new ideas into the business." Last year, 260 graduates were recruited in the stores, and a further 70 in Head Office.

Glittering alumni: Keith Oates, the UK's joint managing director, is also a non-executive director of BT, and was formerly a member of the Sports Council of Great Britain.

Pay: Graduates start on £18,000, and there's a London weighting of £2,760. The company is particularly proud of its "exceptional" benefits package, which after two years with the company equates to an extra 30 per cent of the salary, and includes perks such as loans (for a car, a season ticket, business clothes, home improvements, education or buying a house), financial planning advice and temporary accommodation. For those changing career, salaries are from £19,500.

Training: M&S is recognised as one of the best trainers around, with emphasis on building technical, managerial and personal skills.

Facilities: An abundance of staff canteens offering subsidised meals.

Who's the boss? Chairman is Sir Richard Greenbury, also a patron of the Samaritans, who became chairman of the Israel-Britain Business Council in 1995.

RACHELLE TRACKRAY

Make the workplace work for you

It's your life, and your career takes up a big part of it. So why waste time following the wrong track? By Meg Carter

ARE YOU the kind of person who always means to sort out your working self, but never quite gets round to it? Maybe it's a better salary you're after - or more responsibility, a change of career, or simply a better balance between work and play.

"All of us have got to take charge of our careers and take responsibility for what we want from an organisation - more than ever before," says Angela Edward, policy adviser at the Institute of Personnel and Development. Working life throughout the Nineties, she believes, has been epitomised by a single concept: "empowerment". Of course, many employers have used this term as a useful way of packaging downsizing and job insecurity. But there are ways of making the current employment climate work in your favour, she says.

The first step is to identify your goal - and the key here is objective self-analysis and honesty. "If you feel like you need a fresh start, ask yourself why. Only by being completely straight with yourself can you begin to work what you want to change, and how to bring it about."

Every Nineties employee can gain from practising this, agrees Alan Margolis, managing consultant at Hampstead Training Consultants. "Otherwise you end up working to someone else's agenda - to help someone else achieve their goals."

In fact, claims motivational expert Jurgen Wolff, although it's an obvious starting point, it's one where many of us go wrong and consequently give up. "One of the biggest problems many of us face is being stuck with old objectives. We foster an outdated image of ourselves. Ask yourself, is this something I still really want to do? And if it's not, don't be afraid to admit it, and move on."

The next step is to develop a campaign of action. "Identify what

talents or skills you have and what you will need to get to achieve your goal," Ms Edward says. "Will you get these opportunities where you are currently working, or should you move elsewhere?"

Dividing your overall goal into a series of smaller, easier, and quicker-to-attain steps can help. "The step-by-step approach makes your goal more attainable," Mr Wolff advises.

Backing up your strategy by making practical changes on a daily basis is essential. If you want to be more assertive, for example, develop a more confident outward appearance. This will also help you prepare to ask for that pay rise you want. It's all part of developing a positive mental attitude, Mr Margolis says.

"Visualising success is a useful trick. If you imagine doing what you really want to do - how you would feel, what you might say - you are more focused on it," he explains. "Imagine yourself running like Linford Christie; you might not end up running as fast as him, but chances are you'll end up running faster than you did before."

Negative thinking is a common stumbling-block. To help overcome this, Mr Margolis advises modifying

your speech. "You can use language to fuel your engine," he explains. "Use 'I' instead of 'one', 'it' or 'people' to be seen as more decisive and direct. Use 'how', not 'why'. Don't say you 'can't' do something, say 'I can if...'. Use the situation to negotiate."

Failure typically comes as a result of being typecast by other people. "For all the talk of embracing change, people don't much like having it thrust upon them," comments Mr Wolff. "It can take time for people - even friends - to accept you in a new role. For some, then, it's best not to trumpet it, but to get on with what you want to achieve: quietly."

Alternatively, he adds, people can give up on their goals prematurely as a result of failing to understand the delicate balance of performance with expectation. "When you start on something new, such as learning a new language, it's exciting and you learn a lot. But after a while, performance begins to plateau and your expectations race ahead. This is the point when many people give up - when success is just around the corner. Understanding this relationship is the key to overcoming the desire to give up," he says.

Making the time needed to realise



Identify your career goal - and go for it

George Hunter

your goals is an aspect of change that many people don't plan, adds Mr Wolff. "Many people fail to follow through their resolutions by overlooking the fact that learning something new will eat into your day."

Regularly monitoring your progress is fundamental - and also

makes a good excuse to reward yourself on a regular basis, which will spur you on. Some people work on achieving their goals alongside someone else - perhaps in the workplace - swapping plans, monitoring and encouraging each other along the way. In addition, talk to people who have already done or are in the process of doing what you want to do. "If you want promotion or to change your career, are there any professional bodies or associations which might be able to help?" says Mr Wolff. "Amidst all the talk about the importance of skills, it's easy to forget success often also comes down to who you know."

Ultimately, achieving your goals will come down to a combination of courage and perseverance. Forget all those reasons you used to put it off last year, Ms Edward says. "January is a brilliant time for a fresh approach. So do it now."

RESOLUTIONS FOR CHANGE

■ Identify your goals and prioritise them. Make a list - putting it down on paper can help the thought process.
■ Ask yourself: "How realistic are my goals?" "What do I need to do to achieve them?" "Am I willing to put in the time and effort?" Self-improvement comes at a price - are you prepared to pay it?

■ When you have honed your list, draw up a plan of action. Break the process down into smaller, more achievable steps.
■ Work on your goals on a daily basis, and monitor progress. Once you feel more confident about your decision, discuss your advancement with a colleague, friend or expert in the field - the two of you can

offer each other constructive criticism, gentle encouragement and regular updates.
■ It is vital to keep a flexible approach, since there are often unforeseen opportunities and pitfalls. Adaptable people tend to achieve what they want far more quickly than those who doggedly follow a plan of action they set down 18 months ago.

Driving Technology Transfer

growing enterprise in universities

Higher Education Conferences

A one-day international conference

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Minister for Science, DTI

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Director of Projects, Office of Science and Technology (OST)

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Professor John Craven

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Stuart Henderson

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Dr Thomas Gering

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Professor Howard Newby

Vice-Chancellor, University of Southampton

John Preston

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The World Bank has launched a three year initiative for development co-operation between the corporate sector, the state and NGOs, entitled "Business Partners for Development" (BPD). In a fast-changing environment, it aims to study, support and promote examples of strategic partnerships between business, government and civil society which combine good business practice with the development of poor communities around the world.

One of four thematic "clusters", the Natural Resources Cluster is managed by a steering group composed of the World Bank Group, CARE International and participating companies. BP plc and CARE are the joint convenors. Field activities are undertaken through "focus projects" approved by the Steering Group and funded by member corporations.

Based at CARE International UK, the postholder will co-ordinate and administer the cluster's activities and core budgets, facilitate learning from focus projects, and promote the work of BPD and the Natural Resources Cluster.

The successful candidate will have at least 3 years experience in social development project management at field level, strong communications skills fitting a complex policy environment, a keen interest in corporate social investment and an understanding of the international development system. There will be some international travel.

The post is funded by the UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID) as part of DFID's wider support for the initiative.

Suitable candidates should send a CV to the Personnel Manager, CARE International UK, Tower House, 8-14 Southamption Street, WC2E 7HA, or fax to: 0171 379 0543. For further details ring 0171 379 5247.

Closing date: 22nd January 1999

Interview dates: 29th January and 1st February 1999

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The closing date for receipt of completed application forms is Friday 22nd January 1999

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The post would suit a person with knowledge of transport planning and possessing management skills. A post graduate qualification in a transport-related field is desirable though not essential.

If you wish to discuss either post informally, please ring Richard Halsman, Head of Engineering, on: 01543 464694.

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If you would like an informal chat regarding the post, please telephone: 01543 462621 and ask for Mike Price, Local Plans and Policy Manager.

The closing date for receipt of completed application forms is Friday 22nd January 1999

If you are interested and would like to be considered for any of the above posts, please telephone: 01543 462613 (24 hour answering service) for an application form or write to: The Human Resources Management Unit, Cannock Chase Council, Civic Centre, Beecroft Road, Cannock, Staffs WS11 1BG.

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For further details please write or fax to: Martin Goodson at the MSF Centre, 33-37 Moreland Street, London, EC1V 8HA - Fax 0171 505 3030.

You can also E-mail him on: goodsonm@msf.org.uk.

Closing date for application is Friday, 29 January 1999.

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For an application pack, please contact the Education Personnel Section, County Hall, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO31 1UD quoting Ref YC73.

Closing date for applications: 22 January 1999.

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THURSDAY RADIO

PICK OF THE DAY

IN THE Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert (1pm), Paul Allen introduces the first of three recitals recorded during last weekend's exhaustive Haydn string quartet festival at the Royal Northern College of Music. Today you can hear the Brittas Quartet tackling Op 54 No 2 in C and Op 76 No 4 in B flat.

Comedy Showcase (9.30pm R2), a series of comedy pilots, begins with Relax! Pauline Quirke (right), of *Birds of a Feather*, stars as the new owner of an upmarket health farm who turns up incognito and exposes the ingrained snobbery of her staff. Written by Terry Ryan, who penned *The Brittas Empire*, and starring Jeffrey Holland, perhaps it should have been called *Relax!*



DOMINIC CAVENTISH

RADIO 1

(97.5-99.8MHz FM)
6.30 Zoe Ball. 9.00 Simon Mayo. 12.00 Kevin Greening. 2.00 Mark Radcliffe. 4.00 Chris Moyles. 6.00 Dave Pearce. 8.00 Steve Lamacq - the Evening Session. 10.00 Trade Update. 10.30 John Peel. 12.00 Andy Kershaw. 2.00 Chris Warren. 4.00 - 6.30 Scott Mills.

RADIO 2

(88-90.2MHz FM)
6.00 Sarah Kennedy. 7.30 Wake Up to Wogan. 9.30 Ken Bruce. 12.00 Jimmy Young. 2.00 Ed Stewart. 5.05 Johnnie Walker. 7.00 David Allen. 8.00 Paul Jones. 9.00 Barry Took's Comedy Classics: the Navy Lark. 9.30 Comedy Showcase: Relax. See *Pick of the Day*. 10.00 Girls and Guitars. 10.30 Richard Ainsworth. 12.00 Katrina Leskanich. 3.00 - 4.00 Alex Lester.

RADIO 3

(90.2-92.4MHz FM)
6.00 On Air. 9.00 Masterworks. 10.30 Artist of the Week. 11.00 Sound Stories. 12.00 Composer of the Week: Rimsky-Korsakov. 1.00 The Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert. See *Pick of the Day*. 2.00 The BBC Orchestra. 4.00 Ensemble. 4.45 Music Machine. 5.00 In Tune. 7.30 Performance on 3. Live from the Colston Hall, Bristol, introduced by Chris Wiles. Alexei Lubimov (piano), Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment/Herbert Blomstedt. Mendelssohn: Overture 'The Hebrides' (Fingals Cave). Schubert: Symphony No 2 in B flat. 8.35 Book of the Month. An extended review of one of the month's most interesting new publications. In 'The Dragon in the Land of Snows', Tibetan historian Tsering Shakyia draws on a mass of oral and archival sources to uncover the story of Tibet's struggle to maintain independence. In the first such history from a Tibetan writer, he looks at the subsequent story of Chinese attempts at unification and at the background to current and future developments in the area. 8.35 Concert, part 2. Brahms: Piano Concerto No 1 in D minor.

9.35 Postscript. Paul Neuberger continues his exploration of the Communist project which sought to use the arts to remould people's minds. 4: 'The Red Mask'. In the West, the biggest Communist movement of the 1930s and 40s was in France. The commitment of some prominent writers and artists to the cause involved radical shifts in creative agendas that were tenaciously resisted by others. Then, from 1956 onwards, revelations about the Stalinist regime rocked writers' and artists' faith in Communism throughout the world. 10.00 Music Restored. Lucie Skeaping and Chris de Souza introduce the second of two programmes of previously unheard treasures from Music Restored's 1998 recordings. This week's selection includes Dowland part songs from Red Byrd, a Biber violin sonata performed by the Russian ensemble Musica Petropolitana, a Handel suite played by harpsichordist Laurence Cummings, and a cantata by Matthias Weckmann played by the Purcell Quartet and friends. 10.45 Night Waves. Paul Allen explores the increasingly complex ways we think about the human body in art and science and talks to speakers in this year's Darwin Lectures in Cambridge, which take the body as their theme. 11.30 Jazz Notes. 12.00 Composer of the Week: Poulenc. (R) 1.00 - 6.00 Through the Night. RADIO 4 (92.4-94.9MHz FM) 6.00 Today.

9.00 NEWS. In Our Time with Melvyn Bragg. 9.30 Transatlantics. (R) 9.45 Serial: The Doctor, the Detective and Arthur Conan Doyle. 10.00 NEWS. World of Pub. A four-part comedy by Tony Roche. 2: Things are looking bad for Barry and Garry. The pub is empty and they are on the verge of bankruptcy. When Barry says they need a miracle to sort them out, Duddy Phil obliges. With John Thomson, Phil Cornwell and Alistair McGowan. 11.30 Experimental Feature: The Hand of Friendship. 12.00 News. 12.30 The Late Book: Last Resort. 12.48 Shipping Forecast. 1.00 As World Service. 5.30 World News. 5.35 Shipping Forecast. 5.40 Inshore Forecast. 5.45 Prayer for the Day. 5.47 - 6.00 Farming Today. RADIO 4 LW (98.1kHz) 9.45 - 10.00 Daily Service. 12.00 - 12.04 News Headlines: Shipping Forecast. 5.54 - 5.57 Shipping Forecast. 11.30 - 12.00 Today in Parliament. RADIO 5 LIVE (693, 90.9kHz MW) 6.00 Breakfast.

behind the scenes at Westminster. 9.00 NEWS. Testbeds. Vanessa Collingridge explores the technologies that will shape our future. 9.30 In Our Time with Melvyn Bragg. Melvyn Bragg and guest discuss ideas and events which have influenced our time. 10.00 NEWS. The World Tonight. With Robin Lustig. 10.45 Book at Bedtime: Nana. Juliet Stevenson reads Enid Blyton's novel. 11.00 NEWS. World of Pub. A four-part comedy by Tony Roche. 2: Things are looking bad for Barry and Garry. The pub is empty and they are on the verge of bankruptcy. When Barry says they need a miracle to sort them out, Duddy Phil obliges. With John Thomson, Phil Cornwell and Alistair McGowan. 11.30 Experimental Feature: The Hand of Friendship. 12.00 News. 12.30 The Late Book: Last Resort. 12.48 Shipping Forecast. 1.00 As World Service. 5.30 World News. 5.35 Shipping Forecast. 5.40 Inshore Forecast. 5.45 Prayer for the Day. 5.47 - 6.00 Farming Today. RADIO 4 LW (98.1kHz) 9.45 - 10.00 Daily Service. 12.00 - 12.04 News Headlines: Shipping Forecast. 5.54 - 5.57 Shipping Forecast. 11.30 - 12.00 Today in Parliament. RADIO 5 LIVE (693, 90.9kHz MW) 6.00 Breakfast.

INDEPENDENT PURSUITS

CHESS

JON SPEELMAN

IN A martial society, respect is all. The best way of engendering this is by beating (like other sportsmen chess players use considerably more colourful verbs amongst themselves) an opponent over the board. As long as the game wasn't disfigured by some ghastly blunder, you, or rather I, feel, once the volcanic emotions of defeat have abated, a grudging or even heartfelt admiration for somebody who has committed this outrage upon my person - and I presume that the same extends to my colleagues.

And shortly thereafter queries started appearing. At the top, Gary Kasparov is down from 2,815 to 2,812 (for the first time ratings aren't being rounded to the nearest 5) but his only activity in the period was a six-game match against Jan Timman, which wasn't supposed to be rated! Additionally, Crowther had speedily received an e-mail from Veselin Topalov, who had been rated for 11 games too many; it seems that Tilburg was rated twice - which affects a dozen players at the very top.

With those serious reservations the current list continues: Anand 2,783, Kramnik 2,740, Shirov 2,725, Morozevich 2,723, Ivanchuk 2,714, Leko 2,711, Karpov and Adams 2,710, Svidler 2,703 and Short 2,697. The other top English ratings are Sadler 2,676, Miles 2,669, myself 2,601 and Nunn 2,600.

Just room for an allegedly currently double-value miniature from Tilburg. Lautier lost far too much time in the opening. At the end of 24...Nxd1 25 Qd4+ g8 26 Rg3+ Bg4 27 Rxd4+ Kh7 28 Qg5 and mates or if 24...Be6 simply 25 Rd1.

All of which verbiage is only to introduce the eagerly awaited arrival of the January 1999 Fide rating list. Of course, we in this country have our own rating system (based as I explained a month and a half ago on the Financial Times Index), and it is that which is of importance to the vast majority of British players. But the list was certainly eagerly awaited by my colleagues and myself, and when a copy of the Top 100 was finally sent to Bob Wade - who among his many hats includes one as a Fide technical director - the phone lines and ether went into overdrive.

White: Vladimir Kramnik
Black: Joel Lautier
Tilburg 1998
Queen's Gambit Slav
1 d4 d5 13 0-0 exd4
2 Nf3 c6 14 exd4 Nb6
3 c4 e6 15 Qd3 g5
4 Qc2 dxc4 16 Rf1 Qb4
5 Qxd4 Nf6 17 Qd2 Nd4
6 Bg5 Be7 18 Qxh6 Nxd2
7 e3 0-0 19 Bxg6 fxe6
8 Bd3 h6 20 Ng5 Bxg5
9 Bxf6 Bxf6 21 Qxg6+ Kh8
10 Nc3 Nd7 22 Qh5+ Kg7
11 Rd1 Qe7 23 Qxg5+ Kf7
12 Bb1 e5 24 Re1 1-0

Within a very short time, Mark Crowther had put it up on his excellent home page - <http://www.chesscenter.com/twic/twic.html> -

POKER

DAVID SPANIER

PADDY JOE was mightily miffed. A gambling kind of player who could win a packet, go broke, borrow a few quid and come back from the dead, all in the same night's play, he was on his best behaviour. Watchful and sensible. So when he found Q-Q in his hand at Omaha, and the flop came down Q-7-2 off-suit, he was thrilled.

has a higher pair than the board cards, an open-ended straight draw, and a flush draw in reserve. Hanif, a strong player, now bet \$600. He was probably shooting a bow at venture, hoping to set up a bluff on the next card. Donn knew him well enough to know his style of play. Next card off was a 4. Hanif now bet \$1,600. As it turned out this was the only card in the whole deck which could help him! He had come in on a speculative holding of 2-4-4-5. The other 4 would have been a heart, giving Donn a flush, a 6 would have given him a higher straight, and a pair on board would still have left Donn with his jacks as top pair.

This is the only flop at Omaha if you start with Q-Q, which does not offer a straight draw to your opponents (as noted by the poker statistician Dr Mahmood Mahmood in *The Science of Poker*). So when the betting came round to him, Paddy checked. He wanted the others to stay in.

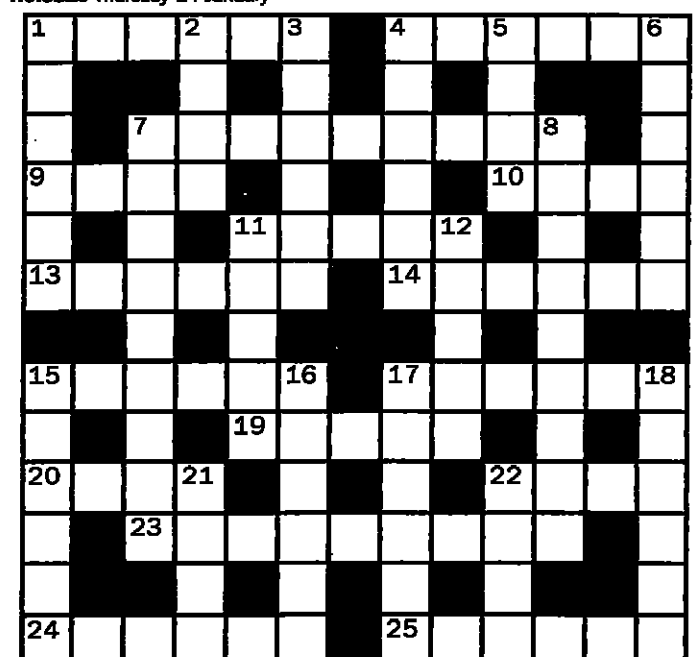
When Hanif bet (this was the big game, now reinstated at the Grosvenor Victoria casino in Edgware Road, London) Donn thought about it and then raised for the rest of his money, another £1,400. He wanted to be sure of getting paid off on the river if he hit his hand. But the last card was irrelevant.

On any other sort of flop he would certainly have bet, to force anyone drawing to hit a straight or a flush to pay for the privilege. What could go wrong? On the very next card a king came down. And someone had a pair of kings in the hole. It cost Paddy his whole stack.

Here is another Irish calamity which befell the Dublin player Donnacha O'Dea. He was dealt 9h-10c-Jh-Jc (double-suited) and raised. The flop came down 2-7-8 with two of his hearts showing. Now Donn

CONCISE CROSSWORD

No.3819 Thursday 14 January



- ACROSS**
- Senior police officers (6)
 - Venetian painter (6)
 - Moving stairway (9)
 - Unattractive (4)
 - Vegetable (4)
 - Part of jacket (5)
 - China clay (5)
 - Probable (6)
 - Bifurcated (6)
 - Vietnamese river (6)
 - Stratum (5)
 - Giboulet (4)
 - Sweet wine (4)
 - Size (9)
 - Lethal (6)
 - Staggered (6)
- DOWN**
- Impressed (6)
 - Simple (4)
 - Marmar (6)
 - Go on journey (6)
 - Accepted (4)
 - To wit (6)
 - Space to manoeuvre (5,4)
 - Runner (9)
 - Written defamation (5)
 - Legendary (6)
 - Delicate (6)
 - Wise counsellor (6)
 - Profited (6)
 - Poet (4)
 - Cutting tool (4)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:
ACROSS: 1 Butt, 2 Terrace (Buttressed), 3 Taboo, 10 Fuchsia, 11 Hod, 13 Morse code, 14 Lament, 15 Hybrid, 16 Resistant, 20 Nile, 22 Scenic, 23 Awaft, 25 Enduring, 26 Fete, DOWN: 1 Bath, 2 Tib, 4 Effort, 5 Ricketty, 6 Custodian, 7 Dead-end, 8 Fom, 12 Dachs-bund, 14 Impasse, 15 Roister, 17 Pigeon, 19 Mean, 21 Bathe, 24 Axe.

SATELLITE AND CABLE

PICK OF THE DAY

THE COEN BROTHERS' films are distinguished by a marvellously quirky world-view. Four of their finest are showcased tonight, starting with *The Hudsucker Proxy* (8pm FilmFour), their homage to Capra, in which Tim Robbins is pulled from the mall room to challenge the way Paul Newman is running a giant corporation. It continues with: *Barton Fink* (10pm), in which arty playwright John Turturro experiences writer's block when

he is brought to LA to work for Hollywood producer Michael Lerner; *Miller's Crossing* (12am), a finely written 1930s crime drama which sees Gabriel Byrne (right) using unorthodox methods to save his boss, Albert Finney; and *Blood Simple* (2am), their creepily atmospheric low-budget tribute to film noir which stars Frances McDormand, the actress who went on to win an Oscar in their Fargo.



JAMES RAMPTON

SKY PREMIER
1.00 The Directors (1980), 2.00 Farnham Tales (1982), 6.00 The Long Walk Home (1990) (64356), 10.00 Hello Again (1987) (60608), 12.00 The Directors (1980), 1.00 Farnham Tales (1982), 3.00 The Long Walk Home (1990), 5.00 The Fifth Element (1997) (61892), 5.30 Hello Again (1987), 5.50 The Long Walk Home (1990), 6.00 The Fifth Element (1997) (61892), 6.30 Hello Again (1987), 6.50 The Long Walk Home (1990), 7.00 The Fifth Element (1997) (61892), 7.30 Hello Again (1987), 7.50 The Long Walk Home (1990), 8.00 The Fifth Element (1997) (61892), 8.30 Hello Again (1987), 8.50 The Long Walk Home (1990), 9.00 The Fifth Element (1997) (61892), 9.30 Hello Again (1987), 9.50 The Long Walk Home (1990), 10.00 The Fifth Element (1997) (61892), 10.30 Hello Again (1987), 10.50 The Long Walk Home (1990), 11.00 The Fifth Element (1997) (61892), 11.30 Hello Again (1987), 11.50 The Long Walk Home (1990), 12.00 The Fifth Element (1997) (61892).

SKY MOVIECLAX
1.00 Movie Magic Specials (1988), 2.00 The Long Walk Home (1990) (64356), 3.00 The Fifth Element (1997) (61892), 4.00 Hello Again (1987), 5.00 The Long Walk Home (1990), 6.00 The Fifth Element (1997) (61892), 7.00 Hello Again (1987), 8.00 The Long Walk Home (1990), 9.00 The Fifth Element (1997) (61892), 10.00 Hello Again (1987), 11.00 The Long Walk Home (1990), 12.00 The Fifth Element (1997) (61892).

SKY CINEMA
1.00 The Outlaw (1943) (68542), 6.00 The Outlaw (1943) (68542), 6.30 The Outlaw (1943) (68542), 7.00 The Outlaw (1943) (68542), 7.30 The Outlaw (1943) (68542), 8.00 The Outlaw (1943) (68542), 8.30 The Outlaw (1943) (68542), 9.00 The Outlaw (1943) (68542), 9.30 The Outlaw (1943) (68542), 10.00 The Outlaw (1943) (68542), 10.30 The Outlaw (1943) (68542), 11.00 The Outlaw (1943) (68542), 11.30 The Outlaw (1943) (68542), 12.00 The Outlaw (1943) (68542).

SKY SPORTS 1
7.00 Sky Sports Centre (1983), 7.30 The Chris Evans Breakfast Show (1983), 8.30 Hollywood Square (1983), 9.00 Sky Sports Centre (1983), 9.30 The Chris Evans Breakfast Show (1983), 10.30 Hollywood Square (1983), 11.00 Sky Sports Centre (1983), 11.30 The Chris Evans Breakfast Show (1983), 12.00 Hollywood Square (1983).

SKY SPORTS 2
7.00 Sky Sports Centre (1983), 7.30 The Chris Evans Breakfast Show (1983), 8.30 Hollywood Square (1983), 9.00 Sky Sports Centre (1983), 9.30 The Chris Evans Breakfast Show (1983), 10.30 Hollywood Square (1983), 11.00 Sky Sports Centre (1983), 11.30 The Chris Evans Breakfast Show (1983), 12.00 Hollywood Square (1983).

SKY SPORTS 3
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SKY SPORTS 4
7.00 Sky Sports Centre (1983), 7.30 The Chris Evans Breakfast Show (1983), 8.30 Hollywood Square (1983), 9.00 Sky Sports Centre (1983), 9.30 The Chris Evans Breakfast Show (1983), 10.30 Hollywood Square (1983), 11.00 Sky Sports Centre (1983), 11.30 The Chris Evans Breakfast Show (1983), 12.00 Hollywood Square (1983).

REGIONAL TELEVISION VARIATIONS

C1 N IRELAND
BBC1 London except: 6.30 Ireland 6.30 (197).
C1 SCOTLAND
BBC1 London except: 2.55 am (622227), 3.30 Doonchall Mor (622227), 3.55 am (622227), 4.00 News 1, 6.30 Reporting Scotland (197).
C1 WALES
BBC1 LONDON & SE except: 0 Wales Today (197), 2.05 John BBC 24 (74373844).
GLIA
Carlton except: 12.30 Angela vs Weather (622222), 1.00 Up-1 (222222), 1.35 Home and Away (622222), 2.00 The Jerry Springer Show (622222), 3.30 Angela vs Weather (622222), 4.00 News 1, 6.30 Reporting Scotland (197).

MURDER, SHE WROTE (2757757), 4.50 ITV
Nightvision (6399979).
CENTRAL
As Carlton except: 12.20 Central News and Weather (622222), 1.00 Echo Point (67530), 3.30 Central News (622222), 5.00 Shortland Street (622222), 6.00 Home and Away (622222), 6.25 Central News and Weather (622222), 6.50 Home and Away (622222), 7.00 Central News and Weather (622222), 7.30 Home and Away (622222), 7.50 Central News and Weather (622222), 8.00 Home and Away (622222), 8.25 Central News and Weather (622222), 8.50 Home and Away (622222), 9.00 Central News and Weather (622222), 9.30 Home and Away (622222), 9.50 Central News and Weather (622222), 10.00 Home and Away (622222), 10.25 Central News and Weather (622222), 10.50 Home and Away (622222), 11.00 Central News and Weather (622222), 11.30 Home and Away (622222), 11.50 Central News and Weather (622222), 12.00 Home and Away (622222).

MTV WALES
As Carlton except: 10.30 This Morning (622222), 12.45 Meridian News and Weather (622222), 1.00 Shortland Street (622222), 1.35 Home and Away (622222), 2.00 The Jerry Springer Show (622222), 3.30 Central News (622222), 5.00 Shortland Street (622222), 6.00 Home and Away (622222), 6.25 Central News and Weather (622222), 6.50 Home and Away (622222), 7.00 Central News and Weather (622222), 7.30 Home and Away (622222), 7.50 Central News and Weather (622222), 8.00 Home and Away (622222), 8.25 Central News and Weather (622222), 8.50 Home and Away (622222), 9.00 Central News and Weather (622222), 9.30 Home and Away (622222), 9.50 Central News and Weather (622222), 10.00 Home and Away (622222), 10.25 Central News and Weather (622222), 10.50 Home and Away (622222), 11.00 Central News and Weather (622222), 11.30 Home and Away (622222), 11.50 Central News and Weather (622222), 12.00 Home and Away (622222).

WESTCOUNTRY
As Carlton except: 10.30 This Morning (622222), 12.45 Meridian News and Weather (622222), 1.00 Shortland Street (622222), 1.35 Home and Away (622222), 2.00 The Jerry Springer Show (622222), 3.30 Central News (622222), 5.00 Shortland Street (622222), 6.00 Home and Away (622222), 6.25 Central News and Weather (622222), 6.50 Home and Away (622222), 7.00 Central News and Weather (622222), 7.30 Home and Away (622222), 7.50 Central News and Weather (622222), 8.00 Home and Away (622222), 8.25 Central News and Weather (622222), 8.50 Home and Away (622222), 9.00 Central News and Weather (622222), 9.30 Home and Away (622222), 9.50 Central News and Weather (622222), 10.00 Home and Away (622222), 10.25 Central News and Weather (622222), 10.50 Home and Away (622222), 11.00 Central News and Weather (622222), 11.30 Home and Away (622222), 11.50 Central News and Weather (622222), 12.00 Home and Away (622222).

6.00 North East Tonight (59337).
SAC
As Channel 4 except: 9.00 Yogo-Brook (184559), 12.00 Be-watched (184559), 1.00 Planted Plant (184559), 1.30 Roots to Success (184559), 1.45 Macbeth (184559), 2.00 Rich Lake (184559), 2.30 Planted Plant (184559), 3.00 Newyddion (184559), 3.30 Heno (184559), 4.00 Pobl y Cwm (184559), 4.30 Newyddion (184559), 5.00 Pobl y Cwm (184559), 5.30 Newyddion (184559), 6.00 Pobl y Cwm (184559), 6.30 Newyddion (184559), 7.00 Pobl y Cwm (184559), 7.30 Newyddion (184559), 8.00 Pobl y Cwm (184559), 8.30 Newyddion (184559), 9.00 Pobl y Cwm (184559), 9.30 Newyddion (184559), 10.00 Pobl y Cwm (184559), 10.30 Newyddion (184559), 11.00 Pobl y Cwm (184559), 11.30 Newyddion (184559), 12.00 Pobl y Cwm (184559).

TYNE TEES
As Yorkshire except: 12.20 North East News and Weather (622222), 1.00 North East News and Weather (622222), 1.30 North East News and Weather (622222), 2.00 North East News and Weather (622222), 2.30 North East News and Weather (622222), 3.00 North East News and Weather (622222), 3.30 North East News and Weather (622222), 4.00 North East News and Weather (622222), 4.30 North East News and Weather (622222), 5.00 North East News and Weather (622222).

6.00 North East Tonight (59337).
SAC
As Channel 4 except: 9.00 Yogo-Brook (184559), 12.00 Be-watched (184559), 1.00 Planted Plant (184559), 1.30 Roots to Success (184559), 1.45 Macbeth (184559), 2.00 Rich Lake (184559), 2.30 Planted Plant (184559), 3.00 Newyddion (184559), 3.30 Heno (184559), 4.00 Pobl y Cwm (184559), 4.30 Newyddion (184559), 5.00 Pobl y Cwm (184559), 5.30 Newyddion (184559), 6.00 Pobl y Cwm (184559), 6.30 Newyddion (184559), 7.00 Pobl y Cwm (184559), 7.30 Newyddion (184559), 8.00 Pobl y Cwm (184559), 8.30 Newyddion (184559), 9.00 Pobl y Cwm (184559), 9.30 Newyddion (184559), 10.00 Pobl y Cwm (184559), 10.30 Newyddion (184559), 11.00 Pobl y Cwm (184559), 11.30 Newyddion (184559), 12.00 Pobl y Cwm (184559).

THURSDAY TELEVISION

THE THURSDAY REVIEW
The Independent 14 January 1989

ROBERT HANKS



TELEVISION REVIEW

THE MOST striking thing about *Murphy Brown* (BBC1) was the money involved. Not that there were vast quantities of it about - quite the opposite, in fact, except for a couple of scenes filmed in a drug-dealer's house, where large rolls of notes provided a striking contrast. But the rest of the time, all this programme could go on about was cash.

Jenny Crowl's fly-on-the-wall documentary series came with a host of unprecedented access to the Metropolitan Police force, and, in the first few minutes, it made the claim good with dramatic footage of a drama raid on a ring of drug dealers. We got shots of policemen slapping on body armour and walking breathlessly in the freezing cold for zero hour, and then bawling down doors and screaming into the suspects' houses - just like you get on TV except that it was real. The sequences had genuine suspense and excitement, but that was dismissed by the voiceover announcing that the operation was costing £20,000 in overtime pay.

Why on earth, you wonder, were they telling you that? The answer was soon obvious. You may have had an old-fashioned, rosy vision of policemen as public servants, and as it happens, last night's episode did offer some support for that view. In the puzzling life, "For the Queen", is a piece of police slang: working for the Queen is working for nothing and with crime on the rampage and hunting in retreat, working long hours of overtime for the Queen has become routine. It would guess that the phrase is an example of modern Liverpoolian irony rather than evidence of wholehearted monarchism.

But what, last night's programme demonstrated was how far the spirit of public service is being eroded by silver poverty. In one scene, when should be buried in a time capsule to explain to future generations what went wrong in the eighties and nineties, a senior CID officer held a budget meeting at which area commanders were referred to as "the customers". Conversation was dominated by warts about impending cuts and lack of money for overtime - what spent handling them by a couple of minutes. When the drugs squad's new chief tried to make sense of the presently squeezed budget by introducing a shift system, his men complained that it would be impossible to mount proper surveillance. (Presumably, men in plain cars signing time sheets and punching clocks would be a bit of a giveaway.)

Their worries were neatly illustrated shortly afterwards, when the squad set out to trap a drugs courier approaching Liverpool on the motorway. When the suspect was held up by rush-hour traffic, the officers in charge suddenly started to worry about the amount they were spending on overtime, wondering whether they shouldn't send home some of the men already involved and bring on the new shift. Being starved of money is the being rationed of oxygen, behaving rationally becomes very difficult. These men may be overworked, but police programmes and fly-on-the-wall documentaries, but *Murphy Brown* has some-thing new: a real sense of the fragility of our institutions, a feeling that we are all skating on thin ice. Watch and enjoy.

Kelsey Grammer

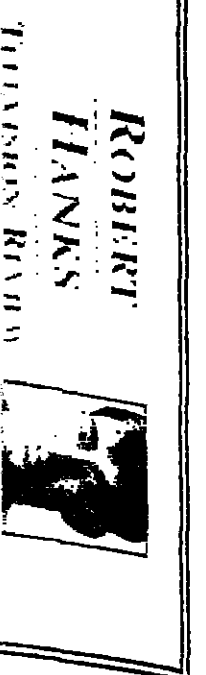
His favourite episode

Episode 71.
You can go home again.
Barker:
Why is it so easy to love our families and yet so hard to live there?
Frasier:
That is one of the questions that makes life so rich and unpredictable.
January 16th and 17th
Special episodes chosen and introduced by the cast.

BBC1

- 6.00 **Business Breakfast** (7:00-8:00) News (1) (69375), 8.00 **Kitty** (1) (69375), 8.45 **The News** Show (1) (69420), 10.05 **News** (1) (69375), 10.55 **News** (1) (69375), 11.00 **Real News** (1) (69375), 11.45 **Can't Cook, Won't Cook** (1) (71733), 12.00 **Call My Bluff** (1) (69375), 12.30 **Business** (1) (69375), 1.00 **News** (1) (69375), 1.30 **Regional News** (1) (69375), 2.00 **News** (1) (69375), 2.30 **News** (1) (69375), 3.00 **News** (1) (69375), 3.30 **News** (1) (69375), 4.00 **News** (1) (69375), 4.30 **News** (1) (69375), 5.00 **News** (1) (69375), 5.30 **News** (1) (69375), 6.00 **News** (1) (69375), 6.30 **News** (1) (69375), 7.00 **News** (1) (69375), 7.30 **News** (1) (69375), 8.00 **News** (1) (69375), 8.30 **News** (1) (69375), 9.00 **News** (1) (69375), 9.30 **News** (1) (69375), 10.00 **News** (1) (69375), 10.30 **News** (1) (69375), 11.00 **News** (1) (69375), 11.30 **News** (1) (69375), 12.00 **News** (1) (69375), 12.30 **News** (1) (69375), 1.00 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صحنه من الامتحان



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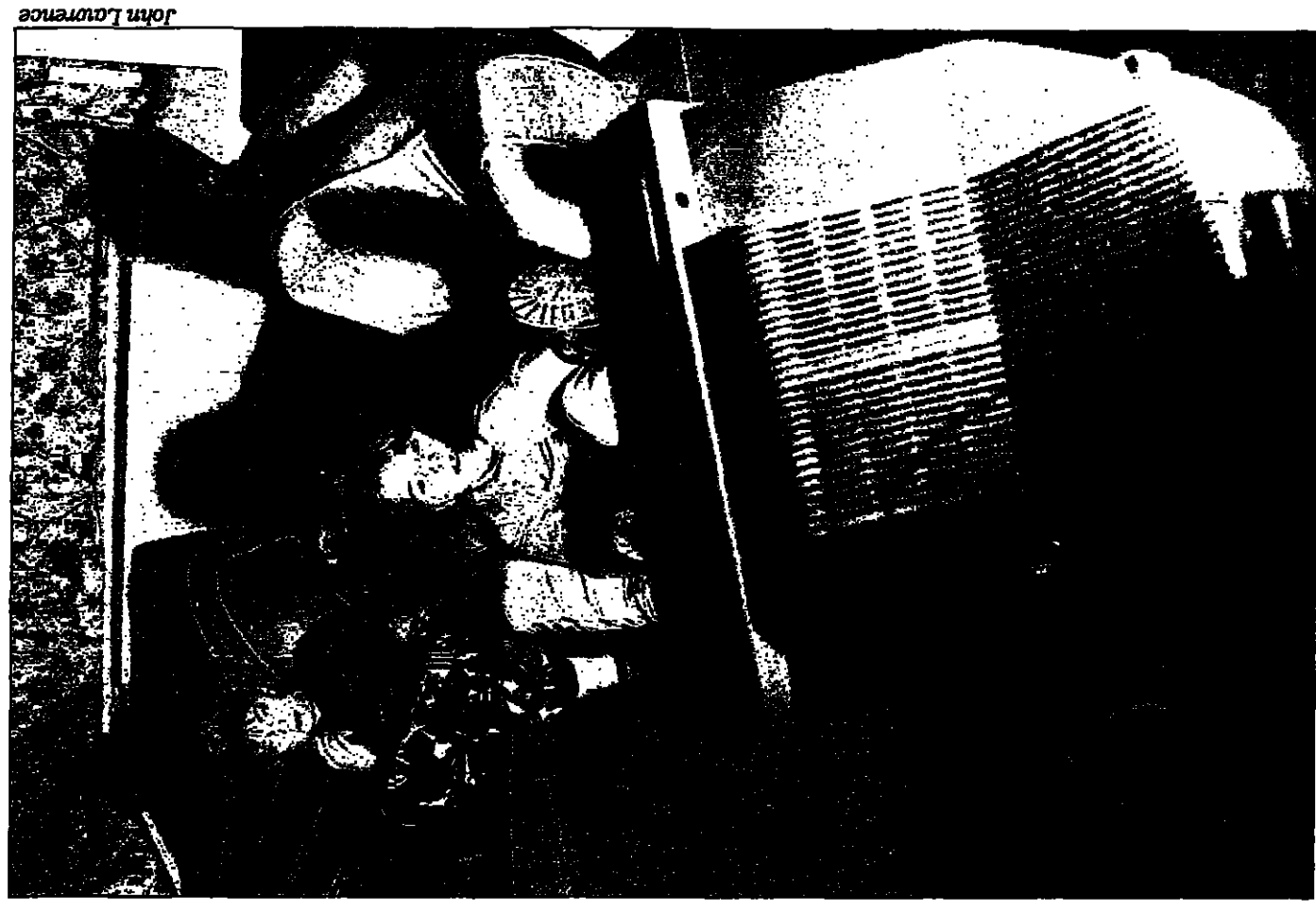
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14TH JANUARY 1999
THE INDEPENDENT

EDUCATION

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4 Behind the scenes with the academics attempting to benchmark degrees
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10 Why one woman gave up teaching modern languages to children



John Lawrence

Telly tubbies

How schools and parents can help children fight the flab Page 8

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LECTURESHIP IN EUROPEAN STUDIES
You will have expertise in some area of European history since the Enlightenment, combined with an interest in the issues of unity, diversity and identity in contemporary Europe. Expertise in a modern European language, preferably German, is essential.
Your primary responsibility will be to take the lead in planning a new distance teaching course focusing on the issues of unity, diversity and identity in Europe which will be at the heart of an interdisciplinary European Studies degree at honours level. You will be based in the History Department where you will be expected to make some contribution to ongoing history and interdisciplinary courses, and to be actively involved in the maintenance of the History Department's BA 5 rating.
Based in Milton Keynes, this post is available from 1 April 1999. Appointment will be made on the Lecturer Grade A salary scale £16,655 - £27,815 per annum or on the Lecturer Grade B salary scale £22,726 - £29,049 per annum, according to academic attainment and experience.
Access details for disabled applicants may be obtained from Margaret Hurchant on Milton Keynes (01908) 652966.
Closing date for applications: 29 January 1999.

LECTURER IN ART HISTORY
A full-time appointment is available for a period of twelve months to contribute to the research strength of the Department of Art History in the European Renaissance period and to assist in the presentation of courses on two courses: Art, Society and Religion in Spain, Florence and Padua 1280-1400 and Art and its Histories. You should possess a good first degree, a postgraduate qualification in art history or significant research publications and research interests within the European Renaissance period.
Based in Milton Keynes, this post is available from 1 April 1999. Appointment will be made on the Lecturer Grade A salary scale £16,655 - £27,815 per annum or on the Lecturer Grade B salary scale £22,726 - £29,049 per annum, according to academic attainment and experience.
Access details for disabled applicants may be obtained from Cathy Playle on Milton Keynes (01908) 652979.
Closing date for applications: 29 January 1999.

LECTURER IN PHILOSOPHY
You will have broad-based areas of competence, sufficient for undergraduate teaching in both standard history of philosophy and twentieth century philosophy of the Anglo-American school. The area of specialisation is open. You will be expected to contribute to the production and maintenance of courses within the Philosophy Department and, more broadly, within the Faculty of Arts; you will also be expected to contribute to the maintenance of the Philosophy Department's research rating. This permanent post, based in Milton Keynes, is available from February 1999. Appointment will be made on the Lecturer Grade A salary scale £16,655 - £27,815 per annum or on the Lecturer Grade B salary scale £22,726 - £29,049 per annum, according to academic attainment and experience.
Please contact Milton Keynes (01908) 652932 for access details for disabled applicants.
Closing date for applications: 15 January 1999.
For the above posts the further particulars and application forms are available from Mrs Jet Lindop, Faculty of Arts, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA. Telephone Milton Keynes (01908) 653370 (this is a 24 hour answering service), e-mail: wrl-recruit@open.ac.uk

TEACHERS FOR PARIS
Language School in Paris seeks full-time English Teachers. Fluent French and University Education are essential. Teaching experience required. Send CV and photo to:
LE COMPTOIR DES LANGUES, 63 Rue Laboulaye, 75008 Paris, France
http://www2.open.ac.uk/personnel/emp/jpl.htm

DEVONSHIRE HOUSE SCHOOL
SCHOLARSHIP EXAMINATION
The School is for boys and girls from age 11 to 13 and a full list of thirteen years of age. A scholarship is offered for entry to the school in September 1999.
Candidates must have been born between 1st September 1980 and 31st August 1991. The Scholarship Examination will be held on Tuesday 9th March 1999. For further information and an application form, please contact the Headmaster, Devonshire House School, 60 Park Road, NW3 6PR. Tel: 0171-435 1818.

16/EDUCATION COURSES, EASTER REVISION

Skills & Employability for Graduates
Higher Education Conferences
The voice of UK universities

Monday 18 January 1999 - Woburn House Meeting & Conference Centre, London WC1
Skills & Employability is a key strand of the DfEE's agenda to promote quality and employability. This conference will follow the forthcoming launch of a joint report by CVP and the DfEE entitled Skills Development in Higher Education. The report will provide the impetus to discuss the contribution of the skills and employability agenda to the development of a competitive economy and the implications for education providers.

Speakers Include:
Rt Hon Andrew Smith MP
Minister for Employment, Welfare to Work & Equal Opportunities, DfEE
Richard Brown,
Director, The Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE)
Pat Raderecht,
Chief Executive, The Higher Education Careers Service Unit (CSU)
Mike Spiller,
Group Personnel and Training Director, Granada Foods Ltd
Professor Leslie Wagner,
Vice-Chancellor, Leeds Metropolitan University
Trevor Fellowes
Higher Education Quality & Employability Division, DfEE
Diana Warwick,
Chief Executive, Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals
Chaired by Robin Lustig,
Broadcaster

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The lecturer of the future will offer
patience and sympathy to students, not
revelation. By Lucy Hodges

Such questions are now being asked as universities adopt new technology to make teaching more exciting, as students increasingly bring their own computers with them to college, and as universities opt for national banks of computer-assessed exam questions. It was revealed last week at the Royal Geographical Society's annual conference that four universities have devised a set of 10,000 computer-marked ques-

"Good quality education depends on interaction among people, and the role of technology is to facilitate and enhance, not to replace academics," says Sir Derek Roberts, provost of University College, London.

The key question is not so much whether academics will become obsolete, but how their job will change. In a sense, instead of academic work being seen as tedious or even "wasting time," it will be valued more than ever.

"I also means academics have to become the scribblers, spending hours designing and putting material for the small screen. You may spend three hours preparing a lecture that takes one hour to deliver; but 200 hours preparing computer-assisted learning that lasts one hour," says O'Shea.

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Only 18 percent of its faculty are classified as lecturers or educators, according to Professor Jose-Marie Giffitts, of the University of Michigan. Moreover, the level and quality of their credentials are not clear. Most are what the university calls "practitioners"—professionals who work for companies full time and are paid by the course. The work load is heavy, by any standards. One faculty member reported teaching 36 classes a year on top of his full-time job as a management consultant. "One has to wonder about the quality of the teacher—and of his management consultancy," says Giffitts.

And for the same underlying reasons, need, patience and sympathy. These are not, perhaps, qualities which have been expected of academics.

"The thing that the tutor has lost is the exposition. They do not reveal their truth any more. The tutor has moved from being God to being the father confessor. The student says, 'I don't understand this.' And the tutor says, 'Man, people have this difficulty. Can I help you understand it this way?'" explains O'Shea.

Thus the student will look to the academic for support and encouragement but no longer for revelation.

Such scores report conventional academics, some of whom regard the new technologies with awe. If not drastic, At Univeristy College, London, (UCL), a now initiative has been launched to try to persuade all academics that computers can improve their teaching and students' learning. New universities have been in the vanguard. But old universities are playing catch-up.

At the University of Michigan, Jung has gone into designing and modifying courses for electronic delivery. This has required 25 per cent more effort on the part of academics, says Professor Griffiths.

The key question is not so much whether academics will become obsolete, but how their job will change. In a stead of academic work being seen as amateur and craft-based, aimed at smallish groups of students, the academic becomes an expert, says Diana Laurillard, Pro-vice-chancellor at the OU. "They become responsible for multimodal resources that thousands can use. At the same time they'll still

And for the online tutoring service, the students need patience and sympathy. These are not, perhaps, qualities which have been expected of academics.

"The thing that the tutor has lost is the expectation. They do not reveal their truth any more. The tutor has moved from being God to being the father confessor. The student says, 'The tutor doesn't understand this.' And the tutor says, 'Maybe you have this difficulty. Can I help you understand this the way?'"

O'Shea.

Thus the student will look to the academic for support and encouragement but no longer for revelation.

A black and white photograph showing a rugged coastline. In the foreground, there are dark, jagged rocks. The ocean is turbulent, with white foam from breaking waves visible. The sky is dark and overcast. The overall mood is somber and dramatic.



marked numbers. With thing student numbers, the marking lecturers have to do has mushroomed.

In the computer science department at University College, London, four staff had, mark, the coursework of more than 500 students - a big load when each student completes several projects a term. Now TACO does it for them. Developed at UCL, it

The academics can choose from a range of question types, including multiple choice, questions where there is a right or wrong answer and questions where they require the student to indicate how certain they are about their knowledge or understanding. It means

"TACO is much quicker... TACO is neither important, nor a substitute for 'real' teaching," says Angela Sasse, senior lecturer in computer science, "properly planned, and taken as part of a broad course, computer-based teaching is not second best. It can be more challenging to students - it highlights underperformance, and you can go a long way towards eliminating cheating."

David Blunkett enjoys a demonstration of artflow at the opening of a technology centre at Sheffield

TACO – this is not the tasty Mexican dish, but a useful piece of software enabling students' coursework to be marked online. With filing student numbers, the marking lecturers have to do has much improved.

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Developed at UCL, it stands for **T**eaching and **C**oursework **O**nline. Lecturers can "plug in" the sets of questions on which they wish to test students. TACO will mark the results, as well as give feedback.

The academics can choose from a range of question types, including multiple choice, questions where there is a right or wrong answer, and questions where they require the student to indicate how certain they are about their knowledge or understanding. It means money is saved on staff costs and paper, and that students are able to get their results back quickly.

"TACO is neither impersonal, nor a substitute for 'real' teaching," says Angela Sasse, senior lecturer in computer science. "Properly planned, and taken as part of a broad course, computer-based teaching is not second best. It can be more challenging to students – it highlights underperformance, and you can go a long way towards eliminating cheating."

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Au revoir children, I'm off

Qualified language teachers are leaving the profession to take up highly paid jobs in City firms, where they feel their hard-won talents will be appreciated. Carol Toms explains why they're going

I recently left modern languages teaching for an excellent job outside teaching. It wasn't the money that drove me to leave, but a series of other factors which are repeated all over the country as good linguists leave teaching. It is a crying shame that teachers who have studied and trained for five years should be lost to the education system so easily.

Undergraduates considering teaching modern languages may be deterred for several reasons: they study for four years for their first degree, and to add a PGCE may seem a year too long to exist as a student for many people. Debts increase, and although there is the promise of an adequate salary at the end, years are squandered by blue chip companies after their degrees, on salaries of £17,000 upwards - and their peers use their languages to do more than order in at a restaurant.

Graduates who spend four years analysing the existential qualities of Canine come down to earth with a bang as they start their PGCE and learn lots of French for German or Spanish or Italian that they had never come across before - for instance "turn to page 23", "where is your homework?", "complete the table on page 89 as you listen to the cassette".

Then they hit the classroom on teaching practice and watch professionals with an excellent command of the language spend 35 minutes trying to teach a bunch of bored teenagers how to book a room in a youth hostel, when the class at don't know what a youth hostel is, b) don't care; c) are never likely to go to France anyway.

Many schools advertise posts for dual language making it difficult for those with only one language to find a post. It is the same schools demanding two languages from their staff that only allow their pupils to study one of the two. In the school I taught in, six out of 80 pupils took two languages at GCSE last year. No-one from that school will sit two language GCSEs in 1999 or 2000. This is not an isolated problem, as studying two languages to GCSE level is increasingly rare in comprehensive schools.

Get over the initial hurdles of foregoing a huge salary and a benefits package bigger than five red pens in the City, get on to a PGCE course, survive it and being an unpaid trainee, manage to find a job. Then you will begin to suffer the



problems which, together with a management style that lacked care, led to my leaving teaching.

POOR RESOURCES: Tape players that were unreliable and liable to ruin a lesson plan at a moment's notice. Fifteen dictionaries between 200 children, each child had to have the same book simultaneously. Text books that the children either found ridiculously easy (top sets) and unchallenging or had too much text in textbook sets. Some new books appeared in my last months there, but a pantomime ensued: a rota to share 90 books between 200 children, each child had to have the same book each week - much valuable lesson time was wasted.

Getting adequate resources and equipment is a continual headache for teachers

Philip Meech

Inspectors bring misery, not support

YOUR VIEWS

reputation? And just how accountable is Ofsted itself, headed by somebody who said recently that a parent could learn all that was needed about a school in an hour's visit?

whom there seems to be very little respect from either staff or children. Mrs B KILBY

Some 262 out of the 1,280 schools mentioned were therefore not happy. Of the teachers I know all but one speak of their inspections leading to anger, breakdowns, severe loss of morale and the depression of pupils/students. Schools should indeed be accountable - but to a "demonsised" Ofsted? Has it never occurred to Woodhead that he never occurred to Woodhead why Ofsted has gained such a bad

Things are getting better
I WAS amazed that in the otherwise excellent article, "Labour's end of term report" (EDUCATION, 31 December), in which experts commented on the state of education, you included the opinions of only one person actually teaching, and he taught

Send letters to Wendy Bortner, Editor, EDUCATION, 'The Independent', 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5DL. Include a daytime telephone number (fax: 0171-238 2451; e-mail: educ@independent.co.uk).

in a grammar school. Although I agreed with most of the comments about the real experts are going to people who actually teach the vast majority of children - ie those in non-selective schools.

As a teacher of seven-year-olds, I have been excited by the Government's obvious commitment to education. My own class had been reduced from 38 to 28, a vast improvement in the quality of education that I am able to deliver. We have also had three of our 12 rotten windows replaced and new drains. Unfortunately the roof is still held up with pit

poor streets



youngsters to stay in education

Mark Chibbers

LABOUR'S INNOVATIONS IN NEWHAM

- The council has published leaflets for parents listing its exam results and truancy rates since 1986.
- Council takes direct control of schools deemed failing by inspectors. In some cases up to half of the staff have been removed.
- Zero tolerance of truancy and violence in schools. Officials visit all parents after children have been away from school for four days. Eighty parents were prosecuted over their children's non-attendance last year.
- School sixth forms have been abolished and replaced with a new sixth-form college to raise staying-on. New system of grants for all sixth-formers whose families are on income support.
- Every school has own local council inspector as part of a quality control scheme to monitor the performance of heads and teachers.
- School-by-school exam targets to raise standards.
- Special needs children integrated into mainstream schools. Support for children speaking English as a foreign language.
- Three parent governors and three local authority governors given seats on the education committee.

lied: with classes that size, in 35 minutes each child would be heard for less than a minute.

Modern approaches to language teaching mean that the days of chanting verbs or even sitting in a language lab are over. Target language is the order of the day - every word is in the language from the moment the pupils enter a classroom. Here is not the place to debate the virtues of this method, but it has brought more fun into pupils' lessons - games, drama, IT and videos are part of lessons in many schools. But if you're teaching in a school where the IT facilities available to you are two clapped out 286s and an Apple Mac covered in an inch and a half of dust, all between five classes, then IT in the national curriculum is a bit of a joke.

Booking a proper IT room meant having to grovel to the teacher who is supposed to be in there, and carting books and dictionaries around there for 35 minutes. Drama and games for classes of 30 and upwards in rooms built for 25 pupils required a degree of organisation that a military commander would be proud of.

Languages teachers often complain of a lack of interest from their pupils. Pupils can be motivated by games, drama, IT and decent books, but only if their teachers are also motivated. Disenchanted teachers produce disenchanted pupils.

- Language teaching is a fight: patience, or negative experiences, of language learning at school.
- With the media who portray Britain as a nation of poor linguists, and reinforce the view that everyone in the world speaks English if you shout loudly and slowly.
- With other professionals who say: "Why should a child who has difficulties in English waste valuable time on another language?"
- With the children who soak up all these views.
- For money to be spent on expensive items, such as tape players, videos and software, rather than on library books, for example.
- It is little wonder, then, that professionals give up the fight, battle weary and retire to other jobs where sparring qualifications are not necessary.
- As for me, I have not spoken a word of French since I was leaving my teaching job, and said: "At least, at home, I can be a normal person."

Corin Redgrave, 59, is an actor and author of 'Michael Redgrave My Father'. He is currently appearing with his wife, Kika Markham, in Noel Coward's 'Song at Twilight' at the King's Head, Islington - and in 'De Profundis', which opens tonight at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre. His sisters are the actresses Vanessa and Lynn Redgrave



taught English and directed the school play. He had acted with my mother (the actress Rachel Kempson) at Oxford. I was taught classics by Theodore Zinn, a wonderful teacher. His classes were a babble of English, occasionally, when it went too far, he would cry, which would subside everyone. I never considered that I would do more than get a place at university but Theodore said: "No, you underestimate yourself." That can make all the difference to a child. I went into the classics and got a scholarship to King's (Cambridge).

Son, you were wonderful! My father came up to see me in only one production, when I played Horner in 'The Country Wife'. I was probably in a blind panic, but he said I'd taught him a lot.

INTERVIEW BY JONATHAN SALE

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صحنه من الامتحان

They don't walk to school, they don't play games and their favourite occupation is watching telly: the result is mass obesity, truly a growing problem. By Emma Haughton

Survival of the fattest

IT'S THAT time of year again. Having consumed many units of alcohol and several million calories above what is strictly necessary to keep body and soul together, we're all picking up the tab for seasonal over-indulgence. Chances are you're dishing off last year's list of exercising new year resolutions, planning that crash diet and just off to rejoin gym membership. Long may you good intentions last, but perhaps it's not just your own health you should be worried about. If your kids spent Christmas slumped on the sofa in front of the TV, gorging themselves on chocolate Santas and selection jacks, new bikes lying unused in the shed, they may well be in need of a radical change of lifestyle than you are.

We eat no more calories than we did two years ago; nutritionists say that inactivity not diet is the key to obesity

entiment survey, our children are a pretty unhealthy bunch. "The Health of Young People 1995-97", as the survey is called, is something of a milestone. Of the 20,000 it studied, no less than a third of those aged 10-14 were found to be overweight or obese. Today's youngsters are too lazy and gluttonous for their own good, it concludes, and present one of the greatest challenges to public health. The survey results, however, come as no surprise to nutritionists and exercise experts, who are becoming increasingly concerned about young people's eating and exercise habits. Obesity is a growing problem, says Dr Barbara Livingstone, lecturer in human nutrition at the University of Chester. "Children's body composition is changing, and it does appear that children are getting fatter, with more fat at the expense of muscle tissue. And

there's no reason to suggest that that trend will reverse."

And, for once, it's not just parents who are to blame: schools, too, are failing to encourage children to adopt a more healthy lifestyle. Last October, many came under attack from the Government for the increasing proportion of junk food in their school meals. Around 3 million children have a school meal every day, and for a large proportion this is their main meal. But too many are filling up on burgers, chips and cakes, says the Government, which has drawn up the first set of nutritional guidelines in 18 years, stressing the need to offer more variety and balance.

"School meals are a real minefield," says Livingstone. "Schools are in the business of making ends meet and tend to supply food that the children want to eat. Many do make an effort to encourage better eating habits and are working under enormous constraints but nevertheless there is a lot more that they can do to encourage appropriate food choices."

However, with many pupils now able to go out to the shops at lunch time, returning school meals may have a limited effect. And, ironically, it seems that when it comes to weight gain what goes in may not be as crucial as the energy subsequently expended. Despite the nation's expanding waistline, we are actually eating no more calories now than we did two decades ago, nutritionists agree that inactivity, rather than diet, is the key element in obesity.

Take walking to school. In the mid-1970s, 72 per cent of children aged 10 walked to school; now just 59 per cent do. Teenagers are even lazier. Another government report found that in the decade to 1991-11, 15-year-olds had reduced their number of walks by 39 per cent - double the fall for the population as a whole.

This finding is backed by research by Professor Neil Armstrong, who measured the activity of 1,000 children aged five to 16 by monitoring their heart rate. Although boys are generally more active than girls, he found, activity decreases through primary school for both sexes, falling dramatically when they go on to secondary level. "A lot of activities that were normal



WHAT CHILDREN SAY ABOUT PE

'I do like PE, the theory and practical, but I wish we did more and other stuff like martial arts. That would be really useful.' (Simon, 15)

'I hate games, I try and get out of it as often as I can.' (Tasha, 14)

'Football's the worst. It's outside and I get muddy. And it's always freezing too.' (Jonathan, 13)

'We have to wear short skirts and a matching top and PE is horrible. If it's cold and you think all the boys are looking at you, why can't we do music and dance instead? That would be cool.' (Holly, 15)

A lack of physical exercise, poor diets of junk food, and hours spent in front of the television are

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO TO HELP?

research carried out at the Dunelm Children's Centre, in Cambridge, in 1997 estimated that a child walking up to two miles a day to and from school would have used up about half a day's food intake over a week. The same is also true for cycling, says Armstrong. Although more children own bicycles, fewer ride them, particularly girls, while one in three boys with bicycles can ride on the roads, only one in nine girls is allowed to do so.

However, while few schools would view how children arrive at school as being under their jurisdiction, what happens after they go through the gates is also under question. Physical education has dropped too far down the curriculum, says Armstrong. "Physical education in schools has been squeezed more and more since the national curriculum, especially with the introduction of the literacy and numeracy hours. PE time is being down, there's a fall in the number of qualified PE teachers, and schools are selling off playing fields for development. There may be a recommended minimum of two hours PE a week, but that's only a recommendation - the amount of time children spend in physical education is totally up to the school."

But the problem is not just quantity, but quality, says Susan Ebb, the head of nutrition and health at the Dunelm centre, which has a facility for researching childhood obesity. Schools are focusing too much on team games, which are often not the best activities for their life, she feels. "Schools have got to get children going, encouraging them to be more active as children, but also setting up

compelling to store up health problems for our children, now and in the future

WHAT CAN SCHOOLS DO?

Take a hard look at your PE programme. Is it fostering a positive attitude to being active, or putting kids off physical activity for life? Are you focusing on all the most talented 3-4 per cent? Do you offer alternatives to team games, such as aerobics, aqua fit or more co-operative activities? Could you offer more activities as lunchtime? Something as elementary as the PE kit can put a lot of children, especially girls, off games. Short skirts, in particular, may make them feel self-conscious and can be pretty chilly too.

While children's innate fitness tends to keep them healthy, if you come into adulthood already overweight, it is extremely worrying to think where you will be in 50 years' time. And it's so difficult to treat overweight adults, because it involves changing eating and exercise habits which are by then deeply ingrained. "Encourage - parents, schools, health professionals - has got to take on board that we must improve the quality of life of our children. We can't afford to ignore it any longer. We have got to put good nutrition and exercise back into their lives."

Sturdily, people are waking up to what's going on, says Ebb, and it's not a moment too soon.

9. HOME HELP Encyclopaedias and dictionaries

ENCYCLOPAEDIAS ARE the Texans of multimedia - big, acquisitive and ambitious, with each annual update bringing yet more information and glib features. Immensely useful and endlessly fascinating, they nevertheless carry a constant danger of information overload. Kids need to learn the hi-and-run approach: identify exactly what they're after, then get in, get it, and get out.

Most encyclopaedias offer similar features. The basic information comes as text, but often diversifies into a bewildering array of photographs, diagrams, films, animations, sound clips, tables, and maps. An atlas and a dictionary are often thrown in for good measure. You'll usually find research software to help with essays and projects, and updates via the Internet. Eyewitness Children's Encyclopaedia (Dorling Kindersley, age 7-11, £29.99) is a gentle and colorful introduction to the reference tool, covering culture, nature, history, science and geography in a laid, but not daunting, degree of depth.

It's very child-friendly: there's a "Grab-a-Gag" section, for example, all guaranteed to make you giggle. It includes your own notes. It is rather odd-sounding, but is useful for children whose thirst for knowledge exceeds their reading level.

Slightly more sophisticated, but just as easy to use is The Kids Middlemarch Encyclopaedia (GSR 8-15, £19.99). Its pleasing balance between clarity and thoroughness makes it an ideal homework tool. But best of all, the publishers seem really to have considered what interests children. There are articles on sports, fairy tales and the pop group The Beatles, for example, as well as more "textbook" earth facts.

If you really want to give your children's grey matter a work-out, however, the specialist Eyewitness Encyclopaedias (Dorling Kindersley, 10+, £29.99) provide a rigorous depth of information. Science 2.0 covers maths, physics, chemistry and the social matter exploring. Let your magnificently up to 30 million million times, John, who is eight, particularly liked the videos: "They make things way easier to understand."

Space and the Universe deals with all things cosmological, with a healthy dose of astrophysics thrown in. You can even try your hand at landing a moon shuttle, or building and launching your own rocket.

Nature 2.0 shows closer to home, with a wealth of information on animals, flora, fish and fungi. Almost at the complexity of species classification, and learn the difference between an elephant, a rhinoceros and a pangolin.

When it comes to the big stuff, Encyclopaedia Britannica has long been the gold standard of reference books. Its new CD-ROM version (all ages, £125) contains 4.5 million words and 3,000 articles, aims for the same in multimedia. It is certainly the most thorough and wide-ranging of the bunch and, once you are familiar with the rather confusing

titles, it is actually quite easy to use. You can search, for instance, using whole sentences. I challenged it with "Who was Andrew 'Barrow'?" an was instantly offered a sizeable résumé of the life and works of my favourite film-maker. However, when I asked it to find "What are Samurais?", it was rather disappointing to find that the giant oracle hadn't got a clue about them.

However, when it comes to sound and vision, multimedia veterans Encarta 98 (Microsoft, all ages, £49.99) has the edge. Unofficially, like others it has some out-of-control features, but is more spread out to two CD-ROMs. The entries read less like the multimedia features are particularly impressive. Among other things, you can take a virtual tour of Paris or the Great Wall of China, analyse your diet, experiment with treaties, or humiliate yourself with phrases in 60 different languages.

IBM World Book (13+, £79.99) has all the usual information, but somehow it rather plays second fiddle to the added features. For instance, you can use IBM's speech recognition software, via Voice, to verbally navigate your way around. The HomeWork Wizard, however, looks particularly useful, helping children with essays, drawing charts, graphs or website pages and even creating your own timelines and quizzes - although quite why you would want to do the latter, I'm not sure. There is also a handy writing highlighter pen and sticky notes with which you can mark text and add comments of your own.

Oxford Interactive Encyclopaedia (Learning Company, all ages, £29.99) is a home-grown addition to the US-centricity of some of the other titles, notably providing its heritage. It's rather textual - besides the articles, there's an extensive dictionary, thesaurus and biographical dictionary - but there are some nice touches. Plan, for example, is particularly taken with the planetarium, type in your location and time zone, and it illustrates the night sky from your bedroom window. "It's really good," he exclaimed, "because whenever I look out of my window it's always cloudy."

EMMA HAUGHTON

